ARUNACHALA

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Arunachala

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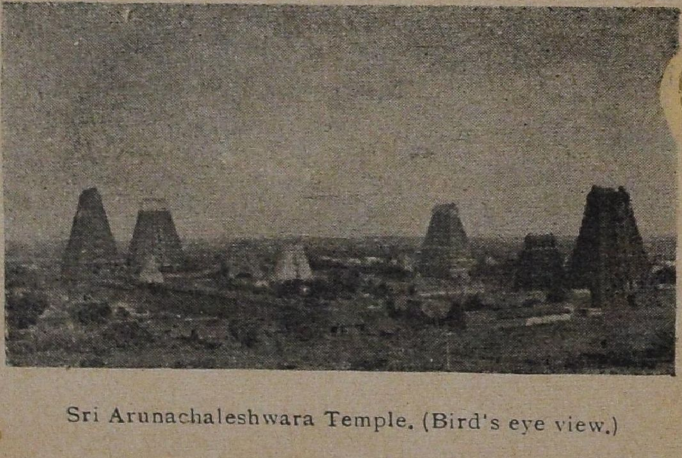
Sri Arunachala Hill.



Sri Arunachaleshwara Temple. (Bird's eye view.)

ARUNACHALA

OR

A Short History of Hill and Temple

IN

TIRUVANNAMALAI

North Arcot District

Madras Presidency, S. India

M. Anant Narayan Rao,

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

1947

Copies can be had from:

The Sarvadhikari, SRI RAMANASHRAMAM

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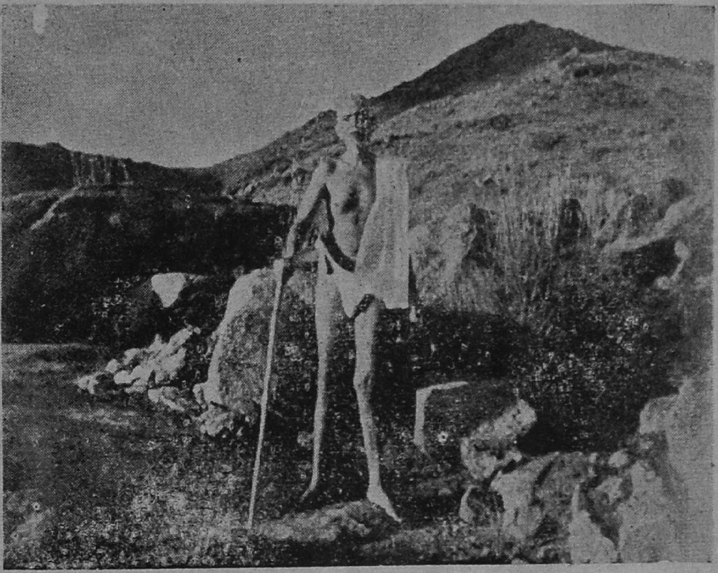


Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

and

His Devotees

With Love, Veneration and Gratitude.

PREFACE.

More than two years ago, it was found necessary to have a book, in the English Language, containing some information regarding the hill and the temple in Tiruvannamalai. The task of writing it was entrusted to the author and he wrote and presented this brief history to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi on the 1st of September 1946, when the Golden Jubilee of his arrival in Arunachala (Tiruvannamalai) was celebrated by his devotees, far and near. The requests of many of the devotees to have it published emboldened the author to do so. The author, who is not a student of history, is conscious of his failure to reach the standard expected in such work and craves the indulgence of the readers.

It is not possible to say when exactly this town came into existence. The first authentic reference to this town, its temple and the Lingam in it, was made during the Third Tamil Sangam. There is considerable difference of opinion regarding the date of the session of that Sangam, and some students of history opine that it was held about the 1st century B. C. Thus the town and its temple must have existed long before that time to be so famous as to draw the attention of those scholars. It seems obvious, therefore, that this town and its temple had their origin in the dim past, the history of which has been lost.

As regards the temple, it is evident, that it originated with the Central Shrine and the extensions to it and around it, were constructed as time passed. The absence of Pallava inscriptions, in this temple, is conspicuous and on that account some

people believe that the Cholas built the first stone structure, over the Lingam, as the Central Shrine. An examination of the frieze around the Central Shrine reveals the so called 'KUDU', a floral design shaped like a spur, or a tongued horse shoe around a human face, shows that it is Pallava Architecture. In Chola architecture the human face in the KUDU is ommitted. With this information we can say that the Central Shrine was built by the Pallavas, perhaps in 600 A. D. If this is conceded, the Central Shrine must have been built about 1300 years ago. The last, or the outermost wall was completed about 400 years ago. Thus the time taken for the growth of the temple to its present dimensions, about 25 acres of land in extent, is about 900 years. If the dates of the inscriptions alone are taken into consideration, the time taken for the growth of the temple will be about 700 years.

It is interesting, as well as fascinating, to tackle problems of the type referred to above, and if this book can rouse the minds of youths to study the early history of their own country, the labours of the author would be amply repaid.

The author is grateful to all his friends for the help they gave him in writing this little book.

TIRUVANNAMALAI.
1st September 1947.

M. A. N. RAO.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In India, foreign invasions, the rise and fall of empires, internecine wars, the advent of great reformers and the introduction of Western culture, have made no impression on the spiritual integrity of Indian culture which abides and progresses unabated. The sustenance and progress are mainly due to the saints and sages whose words of spiritual wisdom have kept the light of Hindu Philosophy as bright as it has always been. Such saints and sages appear and disappear punctuating, as it were, the philosophical thoughts. These saints and sages usually selected beautiful places such as a hill, bank of a river, where they remained, meditated, and obtained self-knowledge or illumination. Whenever people found such saints, they visited them frequently, and for their own uplift, heard their words of wisdom. Such places, eventually became centres of pilgrimage. Often, some of these places were looked upon as the seats of Sidha Purushas. Natural beauty more especially that of a place of pilgrimage, when seen, translates itself into a feeling of joy. This experience of joy is in itself a glimpse of the inward bliss which humanity is striving for, and this is the secret of the sanctity attributed to a place of pilgrimage.

The origin of such places of pilgrimage and events connected with their growth are often obscure because those events are handed down to posterity, from early days, as legends, folk songs and stories. All these were memorised and taught orally, from generation to genaration, before they were collected and written down as Puranas. In these legends, songs and stories, inspite of poetical exagger.

ation by imaginative narrators of the time, the central theme regarding the sanctity of the place remained constant, even though the topography of the place changed with the lapse of time. To some people the legends, folk songs and the like, may appear grotesque, but even in them will be found an outer or exoteric meaning to those who are not so advanced as to appreciate the inner or the esoteric meaning, which is usually highly spiritual.

Tiruvannamalai is such a place of pilgrimage. It has a hill called Arunachala or Annamalai among other names, with a town bearing similar names, at its eastern foot. In the town is a large and beautiful temple dedicated to Siva, Sri Arunachaleshwara. From the remote past the site has been looked upon as very sacred and the temple appears to have had its origin about two thousand years ago or even earlier. The temple evidently grew around a small sanctum-sanctorum over a lingam to its present size in the course of several centuries. The sanctity of this locality has been increased in recent years, by the presence of the world famous sage Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who resides in an ashram at the southern foot of the hill. An extension of the town is growing up near this ashram.

The town and the hill are situated in the present North Arcot District. In the early periods of time this hill and the town were in Thondainadu, a part of the province called Thondaimandalam by the Pallavas. It originally belonged to the Cholas and was the nothernmost Tamil country, but was conquered by the Pallavas about 350 A.D. This old province extended between the two Pennar rivers, north and South, the Bay of Bengal in the east, to the present Mysore province and Cuddappah in the west. This part of the country passed through the hands of the Pallavas,

Rastrakootas, Cholas, Hoysalas, and Vijianagar kings. Later, this part of the country came under the influence of the Muslims, Mahrattas, the French and finally, from the 19th Century, of the British.

There is evidence in the scriptures that Aryan sages like Agastya and Gautama migrated to South India in the remote past. Agastya studied the Tamil language and wrote a Tamil grammar; he was followed by Tholkapyar who was as great a scholar and grammarian as the other. All of them, it would appear, came to South India to gather more knowledge of Saivism. It is said that these great men were followed by Aryan families who settled down in the south.

The religion of the earliest Tamilians appears to have been the worship of deified souls of their dead ancestors or heroes with offerings of meat and alcohol (Animism). Traces of this type of worship are found even today in some villages in South India. Saivism and Vaisnavism were also the predominating religious faiths even from the early days. From the legend about the greatness of the Arunachala hill, it is evident, that Brahma ceased to be a deity for separate worship. There are no temples in South India dedicated to Brahma alone and in North India there are only two, one in Pushkar near Ajmere and the other in Idar State in Rajaputana. Ordinarily Brahma is worshipped along with Vishnu and Siva as Dattatriya. It is interesting to note that the idea of Siva being the supreme deity apparently orginated in South India, with Arunachala hill as the first representation of the Lingam. It is evident from early Tamil literature that, in South India, Saivism was more popular than Vaisnavism. It is possible that the catholicity

of Saivism moved the devotion of a large number of people. The popularity of the Saiva faith can be guaged by the number of saints it produced viz., 63 as against 12 Vaisnava Saints between the sixth and eleventh centuries A. D. The Pallava kings aided the revival of Vaisnavism as well as Saivism and the Chola kings were Saivas. Thus the way was paved for the disappearance of Buddhism and Jainism in the south.

Among the Tamils in the early days, there was no caste system, but there appears to have been a class system--Valangai, or right handed section and Yedangai, or left handed section. Even if there was a caste system of the Aryan type, it was not so rigid as it is at the present day. There is evidence to show that a brahmin became a general of an army or a minister of the king, a kshatriya or a sudra became a vedic scholar and so on. It may be said that the caste system was mixed up, as it were, with the class system. Even this class system may have come into being during the reign of the great Chola king Rajaraja I. (985 to 1013 A. D.) He had a standing army and it was composed of two sections. The right hand section contained men of the country who had won for him victories in his campaigns. The left hand section consisted of new soldiers from other countries, chiefly from the Pandya, Andhra, and Kannada countries. Rajaraja seems to have kept his soldiers in close touch with the temples so that the services of the masons, artificers, mucisians, and others found in their ranks could be utilised there. During the period of Rajendra Chola also some such differentiation is seen. In the reign of Bukka Raya II, (1404 to 1406), king of Vijayanagar, there appears to have been trouble among the people owing to this class difference. In Sri Arunachala temple, there is an inscrip-

tion of the Vijayanagar king Vijaya Bhupati which records that in Tiruvannamalai no distinction should be made between the right hand and left hand sections and that the Kaikolars (weavers) belonging to the left hand section should have the same previleges as those enjoyed by the right hand section as regards their duties in the temple such as carrying the temple paraphernalia which includes chamara, mace, conch etc. In short it would appear that this distinction was between the agricultural classes on the one hand and the artisans on the other, owing to political, social and religious rivalry amongst the people which made itself felt during the 10th and the 13th centuries A. D., after the advent of reformers like Ramanuja and Basavanna. Ramanuja succeeded in strengthening the foundations of Vaisnavism and struggled against the Jains. He succeeded in converting the then king of the Kannada country (Mysore), Vittala Deva, from Jainism to Vaishnavism. This king was renamed Vishnuvardhana. That was a great blow to the Jains. Basavanna, a brahmin, during the reign of Bijjala (1156 to 1167 A. D.) founded the Virasaiva or Lingayat Sect. He converted brahmins also to this sect and such converts were called Aradhyas. It is interesting to note that the grandson of Bijjala gave lands to the Arunachala temple. His name was Immadi Chokka Perumall Moryadarayan, alias Kalideva. This gift was made in the 18th regnal year of Kulottunga III in 1196 A. D. It may be that he was a feudatory of the Chola king. The land he gave was in Myranpalli in Shaliuipatru in the eastern portion of Moraisur Nadu. (It is likely that the word Mysore was derived from Moraisur). It looks likely that Basavanna's influence was felt among the people of this part of the Chola country fairly rapidly.

The real home of the Saiva and Vaisnava revival was in the south. Between the 8th and the 15th centuries five great religious reformers were born in South India. Sankara, a brahmin of Kerala, was the foremost expounder of the Advaita Philosophy; Ramanuja, a Telugu brahmin of Sriperambudur, founded the Sri Vaisnava Cult; Basavanna, a Kannada brahmin, of Kalchuri kingdom, (Kalliani Chalukya), founded the Virasaiva Cult; Madhva, a brahmin of the Tuluva country (South Canara), was the expounder of the Dwaita Philosophy; Ramananda, a Telugu brahmin, who was the guru of the famous Muslim saint Kabir, after preaching in North India settled down in Benares. These great religious reformers, though they differed in certain details. preached the unity of the Godhead and the brotherhood of man.

Chapter II

ARUNACHALA HILL

The Arunachala hill is in the eastern ghats in the North Arcot District. It is an isolated hill, about fifty miles inland from the Bay of Bengal and rises into a fine peak, 2268 feet above sea level, forming a conspicuous object in the landscape for miles around. On this hill there are many caves and hermitages near which are freshwater springs or tanks. On the western slopes are forest areas, but the eastern slopes are more or less bare. Among the caves the best known are the Vannati cave, the mango-tree cave, the Namasivaya cave, the Virupaksha cave and the Skandashram. There is a fine tank and hermitages near

the mango-tree cave. From the two last named caves a very beautiful view of the temple, the town and the picturesque landscape for miles around meets the eye of the onlooker. The hill has many other names. Arunagiri, Sonagiri, Sonasaila. and Sudarsanagiri are some of them, while it is sometimes referred to as Jothirlingam or Tejolingam, which means Lingam of fire, Lingam being the Nishkala (formless) emblem of Siva. The hill is referred to in the Puranas as the oldest hill on earth, and is regarded as the heart of the earth owing to its sanctity. The Deccan plateau, particularly the eastern ghats, has been known to be the oldest land of the earth and this fact has been pointed out again by Dr. Birbal Sahani in his presidental address to the Indian Science Congress in January 1940 It is clear, therefore, that the Arunachala hill is older than the Himalayas.

There is a Puranic story which refers to the cataclysm which brought into existence the Himalayas. The story runs that the Vindhya Mountain became conscious of its height and importance and Rishi Agastya, on his way down south, wanted to humiliate it. To do so, Agastya is said to have swallowed the sea which then existed to the north of the mountain, came to the south to Cape Comorin, pressed the tip of the peninsula and thus tilted the land. Simultaneously he passed, into the Indian Ocean the sea water which he had drunk. The result of this was that a loftier range of mountains (Himalayas) than those of the Vindhya range appeared in the north and the Jambudwipa of old became the Indian Peninsula. This story, therefore, not only records a cataclysim but also gives a definite hint that Agastya came to South India very much earlier than the present historians opine.

The Himalayas have the reputation of having afforded protection to Rishis, Tapaswis, or seekers after Truth, from time immemorial. It is not difficult, therefore, to surmise that this older Arunachala hill did the same from a still earlier period. It is from such Tapaswis, who may be called "Aranyakas" that we have learnt that subjective speculation on the nature of Truth leads to the establishment of the claim that the knowledge of the Self is the highest goal of life. People approached such great men with veneration and it is little wonder that the very places where they lived became sanctuaries.

A vivid description of the glory of this sacred hill and the bliss enjoyed by the earnest devotees who worshipped here, is given in many of the Puranas, such as the Siva-maha Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Arunachala Mahatmya, and others. A description of some of the festivals observed here is also given in them. The following is a story found in most of the Puranas regarding the origin and sanctity of this hill and the Lingam, at its eastern foot, over which has come into being the Arunachala temple.

In the dim past, it is said, a controversy arose between the deities Visnu and Brahma as to which of the two was the greater. Their controversy resulted in the misery of the manifested world. The Devas approached Siva with an appeal to settle the dispute between the two and thus remove the suffering of the world. Lord Siva then appeared before these two in the form of a colossal self-luminous column and the two deities heard a voice which issued from It asking them to seek Its upper and lower limits, stating that he who found either of these was the greater deity. Accordingly they decided to explore the ends. Vishnu became a boar and started burrowing

into the earth to find the base, whereas Brahma became a swan and flew up to reach the top of the Self-liminous pillar. Vishnu with all his power, could not discover the base and he got lost in meditation with the result that he experienced the Supreme Light which dwells in the hearts of all and became oblivious of his physical body. Brahma, who had flown up as a swan, was mounting in the sky but he could not reach the crown of the colum of Light, even though he went beyond the starry heavens. He was growing despondent, and when he saw a bract of Ketaki (Pandanas), falling towards the earth, he decided to beat Visnu by a trick, namely, to tell him that he (Brahma) had brought it from the crown of the column. Simultaneously Brahma heard the words of Divine Beings who came out of the column. They said—"This absured person Brahma is trying to find the top of that pillar of Light from a spark of which crores of Visnus and Brahmas are created; it is not possible to know the beginning or the end of this column of Light without the grace of Him whose true form even the Vedas cannot understand. Ignorant people cannot know about this 'Self-created Light', even as those born blind can have no idea of the sun. Vishnu, who went to the under-world, to reach the base of this pillar returned without success". Brahma, when he heard the words that Vishnu had failed, was pleased and became a prey to conflicting thoughts, good and evil. He returned to the earth and lied to Visnu that he had found the summit and brought with him the bract of Ketaki from there as a token of success. Visnu when he saw it prayed to Siva thus—"You are the greatest of the great and the smallest of the small. You are Self-knowledge. You are the Pranava 'AUM'. You are the beginning the middle and the end of everything. You are everything and you illumine everything. We, the

ignorant jivas, forget you as our Lord through delusion. I pray you. O Ocean of Mercy, how did you show the summit of the Self-luminous Lingam to Brahma? Explain to me why?" Lord Siva, at that instant, came out of the pillar and said—"Visnu you alone are great".

Brahma, abashed by his own mean action of telling a lie to Vishnu, stood apart for a while thinking. He then realised his folly, walked round Siva, and prayed—"O Ocean of Mercy still thine anger. Thou, Our Lord, bindest us poor jivas with desire and freest us from bondage by means of Thy grace. Through conceit I acted as I did. Do I merit greater punishment than this humiliation? I have found now that only those that obtain Thy grace can obtain the inner vision of Thy self-luminous Lingam. It is obtained by jivas like Visnu who in humility worship Thee and not by those who hold their heads raised through conceit. Thy grace on one makes him the greatest of the great like Thyself. Thy blissful form is realised within and without, by those whose minds are centered completely on Thee alone. Like a surgeon who first inflicts suffering, Thou healest those who suffer from conceit. O Lord forgive me Thy servant and pardon my folly". Siva blessed them both and at their request established Himself as the Arunachala hill and also as a small Lingam at the eastern foot of the hill so that all could worship them as emblems of Siva. Lord Siva in so doing, admonished them thus—"All jivas live, move and have their being in Me. I am latent in you just as fire in wood, ghee in milk and so on. You cannot perceive such latency with the aid of your senses, or by learning either from books or from scholars, but you can know Me only by meditating on Me alone. I am now here as the Arunachala hill and also as a Lingam. The moon gets its light from the sun, even so other holy

places will henceforth get their sanctity from Arunachala. This is the only place where I have taken this form for the benefit of those people who desire to worship Me and obtain illumination. Arunachala is Omkara-swarupa or AUM itself. I will appear on the top of this hill every year on the Karthikai day in the form of a peace giving beacon. Those who see that flame and meditate on it will realise the 'Great Flame' or the 'Luminous Self' in themselves."

Thus goes the story of the greatness of Arunachala and it is said that Nandikeshwar narrated this to Markandeya the sage who defied the god of Death, by surrendering to Siva. The story has an inner meaning besides indicating important pionts of Advaita Philosophy. Brahma represents Intellect (Buddhi), Visnu represents Ego (Ahankara) and Siva represents Atman (Self). Ego and Intellect realised the futility of knowing Atman because the latter is beyond the senses and transcends both Ego and Intellect. The Ego and Intellect, therefore, surrendered themselves completely to the Atman and obtained illumination or Self-knowledge.

It is said that Gautama Rishi did his penance near this hill. It would appear that he resided on a small hill called Pavalakunru, on the north-eastern foot of Arunachala hill. Similar sages came to this hallowed hill for tapas in prehistoric days. In Arunachala Mahtmya, as in some other Puranas, it is stated that somewhere near the peak of this hill abides a Siddha Purusha under a banian tree. The place is said to be inaccessible. This tree has been seen by Sri Ramana Maharshi and he has related the incident to his devotees. One morning he saw in one of the dry waterways, down the north slope of the hill, a large banian leaf. His attention was drawn to it by its unusual

size, it being large enough to serve a meal on. He resolved to see the tree which bore such large leaves and climbed up the hill along the waterway. After climbing the steep and very rugged parts of the hill he reached a place from where he saw a big rock in the distance, and on it stood the banian tree he was looking for. He was amazed to see such a tree growing on what looked like sheer rock. He drew nearer to the rock after a precipitous climb, but as he was proceeding nearer still, his leg inadvertantly disturbed a hornets' nest in the shrubbery and the hornets severely stung him on the leg. He allowed the hornets to appease their wrath as atonement for disturbing their peace, but he felt that it was a warning that he should not explore further into the mystery of the place and returned to his abode late in the day. The devotees who were anxiosly waiting for his return, saw the condition of his leg and asked him how it happened. He narrated his experience. He fully believes in the existence of a Siddha Purusha living under the banian tree referred to. The reference in the Puranas regarding the existence of the Siddha Purusha and the banian tree on this hill, shows that other sages had also observed them long before. In Sri Arunachala temple there is a mantap or seat dedicated to this Siddha Purusha, who is also called Arunagiri Yogi.

Ancient Tamil scholars such as Nakkirar (1st century B.C. to 1st century A D.), Kapilar and Paranar (125 to 225 A.D.) have referred to the shrine at Annamalai and later Pattinathar and his colleague Senthanar have sung praises of Arunachala. Many saints have sung songs in praise of this hill and its sanctity. The early Tamil literature records the above and also about Tirunavakkarasu and Tirugnanasambandar who visited this holy place. The two saints were the contemporaries of the Pallava king

Mohendra I. (600 to 633 A. D.). They lived and taught a century before Sankara (788 to 820 A. D.). Tirugnana-sambandar was inspired by the sight of the hill when he saw it from a town called Arianinallur, near Tirukkoilur, twenty miles from the hill and composed hymns in praise of it. He visited Tiruvannamalai and stayed on the hill and worshipped it as Tejolingam. Sekkalar Swami (1088 A. D.) has given some details of this visit in his work Periapurana. The same author says that Tirunavakkarasu worshipped Siva on the top of the hill and obtained enlightenment. Sunderamurti Swami refers to woiship of Annamalaiar in his work Tiruttogai, and Manikavachakar has sung praises of this hill. The last is said to have lived for some time in Adi Annamalai village at the foot of the western slope of the hill. The last two saints lived in the 9th century A. D. About the middle of the 13th century Sidhopant, the grand father of Gnyanadeva visited this shrine. Sidhopant was a Maharatta saint. It is said that two other saints from Maharatta country Namdev and Samarth Ramadasa also visited this holy place. The former lived in the 14th century and the latter in the 17th century.

Shaktas regard this hill as Sri Chakra, a diagram of 43 triangles. Some consider that the form of the hill resembles the first half of the Sri Chakra which is called Meruprastana, the emblem of the Cosmos. In one of his Ashtakas, Sri Sankara calls this hill 'Meru' and says that Siddha Purshas are found here and also on the Himalayas. It would seem therefore that Sri Sankara had also visited this holy place.

Some centuries ago a Saiva Saint by name Nama-sivaya, lived in a cave on this hill. He had a disciple also called Namasivaya. The latter, it is said, possessed

spiritual powers (Astasidhis). The guru, when he found these powers in his disciple, gave him his independence by sending him away to Chidambaram to teach aud to serve humanity. The disciple, from that time, was given the name Guru Namasivaya. Saint Namasivaya has written hymns on Arunachala and one of them, Annamalai Venba is highly valued. The devotees of this saint brought into being certain Saiva Institutions in Tiruvannamalai and these exist now under the name Veera Saiva Matams. Saint Namasivaya came from Kannada country about the end of the 13th century. The cave in which he died, and his tomb, is found on the south of Molaipal tank, on the eastern slopes of the hill. Virupaksha Deva, another Saiva saint, a contemporary of Namasivaya, lived in a cave to the west of and on a higher level than Namasivaya cave. This saint has not left behind any of his writings. Arunagirinatha is another saint who lived in Tiruvannamalai in the 15th century. He has written many stotras in praise of Muruga (Skanda or Subramanya.) He was a great scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit. In one of his songs on Muruga, son of Siva, he says "You and your father are one" and this shows that he had realised the oneness of the ultimate reality. His writtings show that his mother's name was Muthu and that he had an elder sister Adi. It is said that he lost his mother when he was young and his sister brought him up and educated him. He seems to have led the life of a libertine in his earlier years but later, when his sister admonished him, he realised his folly, changed his ways and directed his energies towards the seaich for Truth. One day he was so depressed, owing to his not obtaining Illumination, that he resolved to commit suicide. He climbed to the top of the Ballala gopura, in Arunachala temple and jumped down

praying to his Ishta Devata Muruga, for His grace. As he fell, he saw a flash of light emanating towards him, from the direction of the image of Muruga situated in the gopura. He thus received Illumination, for the attainment of which he had been striving so hard. Instead of losing life he gained it. He was a contemporary of Proudha Deva Raya of Vijayanagar (1424 to 1446 A.D.) and his Jain minister Sambandan. It is said that this saint made Muruga reveal himself, in a pillar, to Deva Raya and the latter built a temple, enclosing that pillar in it, to commemorate the event. This small shrine around the pillar is called Kambath-ilayanar.

Another saint connected with Arunachala is Kondappa Desikar. He was born in Vellore, was intructed by Mouni Swami of Chidambaram, came to Tiruvannamalai, did tapas on Arunachala and died in 1531 A. D. His tomb is found in Isanya Mutt at the north eastern foot of the hill. A history of his life is found in the book called Isanya Gnana Desikar.

Two yoginis are associated with this sacred hill. Their names are Jatini Sanmukha Yogini and Ammani Ammal. The latter lived in the early part of the 17th century. She constructed the northern gopura of the Arunachala temple. It is said that, to construct this tower, she collected money by begging. It seems that this woman had a mysterious power of knowing the amount of money kept in any box, in the house she visited, out of which she claimed a part towards the cost of the proposed construction. This tower is called Ammani Amman's gopura.

The life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi the sage mentioned above, who now resides in the ashram named after him, on the southern slope of the hill,

are well known. In his early days first in Tiruchuli, his birth place and later in Madura where he studied, he always felt a thrill in himself whenever the name of Arunachala was uttered in his presence. One day when alone in his room in Madura, a sudden fear of death seized him, though he was quite healthy at the time. He lay on the floor, holding his breath as if he were dead, and he asked himself the questions "Is the body I?" "With the death of this body am I dead?". He suddenly discovered that it is only the material body that dies but the "I" or the "Spirit" abides even after death. The young Ramana came out of this experience quite a different Individual, and his interest now lay only in enjoying the bliss of inner serenity and spiritual strength but not in his studies, relations, and friends. He surrendered himself to the All-absorbing Consciousness and on one occasion, when he was rebuked by his elder brother for not paying attention to his studies, the thought of Arunachala came to his mind and he quietly left for Tiruvannamalai in his 17th year. Since then, over fifty years now, he has not left the precincts of this hill which he holds very sacred, as is seen from the hymns he has composed in its praise. His reputation as a great sage is world wide and people from all countries visit the ashram to pay their homage to and obtain his blessings.

Two other great souls Seshadri Swami and Kavyakanta Ganapati Shastri were Sri Ramana's contemporaries. The former was born in 1870 into a brahmin family in Vazhur in North Arcot District. He was also attracted by this sacred hill and came to Tiruvannamalai in 1890 and remained there till his death in January 1929. His tomb lies to the east of Ramanashram. Ganapati Sastri was born in 1878 into a brahmin family. He was a great sanskrit scholar and his ideal was to be like one of the

ancient sages. He visited many sacred places in quest of Truth and in 1903 came to Tiruvannamalai attracted by the sacred hill. He came in contact with Sri Ramana Maharshi who helped him in attaining the peace he was seeking. With the blessings of the Maharshi he opened his own ashram in Kharagpur where he died in July 1936. He is the author of many literary works and stotras in Sanskrit and his forty verses in praise of Sri Ramana, whom he called Bhagavan Ramana Maharashi, show how great his reverence for him was. The last verse translated into English is given below as an example:

"Sri Ramana Maharshi is an ideal held out before mankind because of his great depth of peace, his transcendental power, his marvellous dispassion, his immense love, his beatific life and his wisdom that dispels the ignorance of Maya."

These are some of the great persons, about whom we know, associated with this hill. There may have been and there may still be other great souls, on this sacred hill, who have not yet come to our notice. The fact that many great souls, through ages, have passed their lives on this hill, speaks to its inherent sacredness. The association of such souls with this sacred hill cannot be the result of pure accident. Verily, greater is Arunachala than his devotees great as they are in the eyes of struggling humanity!

It is said in the Puranas and it is endorsed by Sri Ramana that Pradakshina or circumambulation of Arunachala hill is conducive to merit. It is said that one has to go round slowly on foot and not in any conveyance. Numbers of people go round this hill daily, or on occasions and during the Karthikai festival in particular, many people go round it from the early hours of the morning

till late at night. This continuous stream of people in their different coloured garments, has been likened, by a post, unto a garland of flowers thrown about the neck of the Arunachala hill in worship. The circumference of the base of the hill is about eight miles and there is a good road running round it· Through out the whole length of the road are many shrines, mantaps, and tanks. At each of the eight cardinal points there is a shrine, a Nandi, and a tank. It is interesting to note the two "Simha' Thirthas" *en route* each being a tank with a Sphinx-like figure in which the entrance to the tank is hewn. Half way along the road on the west of the hill is a temple recently repaired by Natukottai Chettiars, called the Adi Annamalai Temple. It is said that the Lingam here was installed by Brahma for worship, which means it is an old Lingam. Among the mantapas round the hill, the important ones are the Agni thirtham and the Agni Mantap, which was probably built by King Ballala's queen; Pali thirtha and Pali mantap probably built by Vena Odeyan in 1230 A. D. and was then named Nissanka Malla's tank and mantap; Yama thirtha and mantap built by a Chola king; Unnamolai thirtha and mantap; Gautama mantap; Manikavachakar's mantap; Vetavalam Raja's mantap; Yelathu mantap or mantap with paintings, because it contains some fresco paintings on the ceiling depicting some episodes in Ramayana and this was perhaps built by Vena Odeyan; Pachaiamman Koil and Durgamba Shrine in which is seen the Khadga thirtham and a Sri Chakra carved on stone. The road round the hill is almost level the whole way, one can walk round without being tired and the various mantapas are well worth a visit.

During the Karthikai and the Thiruvadal festivals, which are the two important ones here, the Utsava Moortis

or images from the Arunachala temple are carried around the hill.

Chapter III

THE INSCRIPTIONS IN AND HISTORY OF SRI ARUNACHALA TEMPLE.

There is a large number of epigraphs on the stone walls of this temple, many of which have been read and published by the Department of Epigraphy. About 129 of these epigraphs are now made available by the above department in its Annual Report of 1929 and in the South Indian Inscriptions Vol. VIII, 1927.

The epigraphs on the walls are not in chronological order; later ones are found alongside earlier ones in many places, and some of the inscriptions relating to the construction of a particular building or the like are not found on that building. Why that is so is not quite clear.

The inscriptions available so far relate to periods from A.D. 849 to A.D. 1582. Most of the epigraphs record the gifts of gold, jewellery, gold and silver utensils, lamps, sheep and goats, cows and bulls, and lands to defray the expenses of conducting the daily pooja or worship or of special worship such as 'Utsavas', the lighting of lamps, the salary of servants, the feeding of the devotees and the poor or of such things as expiation of the sin of accidental homicide or a prayer for the merit of the departed soul of a notable person. In some inscriptions are noted curses on those who fail to carry out the purposes for which the gifts

are made. In some are recorded praises of the king or chieftain, composed by men who received patronage or active kindness from them.

There are no inscriptions of the Pallava period, the earliest one is that of the Chola king dated 849 A.D. This temple, however, was in existence in Tondaimandalam, a part of the Pallava empire. Perhaps at that time it was a small one and made only of brick, mortar and wood. At any rate if there were any inscriptions they have been lost.

The Pallavas had to fight with the Chalukyas and the Pandyas from the beginning of the 7th century. In the 8th century they had also to fight with Rashtrakutas. This was the begining of the Pallava decline and when king Aparajita Pallava came to power, there were dissensions over the Pallava succession which led to disloyalty among the feudatories. The Cholas, with Vijayalaya as their leader took advantage of the weak state of affairs and became independent by defeating the Pallava king Aparajita. Thondaimandalam thus came under the Chola authority. Aditya, the son of Vijayalaya, made the Pallavas his feudatories and the Cholas, as of old, succeeded in establishing themselves in the South as a leading power.

The earliest of the inscriptions are on the walls of the central shrine which is the oldest stone edifice of the temple. Two of them refer to the third and fourth regnal years of the Chola king Vijayalaya who ruled from 846 to 880 A.D. The earliest epigraph is on the south wall and this may have been inscribed in the year 849 A.D. (Epi: 58). Vijayalaya and his son Aditya I., had

to fight the Pallavas the son acting as the viceroy or crown prince. They defeated the Pallavas at a place called Ukkal (in the North Arcot District). Epigraph 65, refers to the 13th regnal year of Aditya Chola and it may have been inscribed in the year 893 A. D. Since the usual reckoning of the regnal years in those days was from the time of assuming power as viceroy or crown prince, this epigraph may have been inscribed actually in the year 859 A.D., which event is thirteen years after Vijayalaya and his son jointly assumed authority in the new Chola kingdom. The stone bearing this epigraph is found on the floor near the Sthala Vriksha or the temple tree (This will be refered to later.) This epigraph records the gift of 20 Kalanji of gold by the chieftain of Chitran Puliyur for restoring a tank. Another old epigraph, inscribed in 922 A.D., refers to the 15th regnal year of Parantaka I, and is to be found on the west wall of the central shrine.

The next interesting epigraph (Epi: 63) is one of Krishna III. He was a Rashtrakuta king whose capital was at Mayurkhandi, or the present Malkhed, ninety miles south of Hyderabad-Deccan. The epigraph is slightly damaged and it may have been inscribed in 950 A.D., soon after Krishna III defeated and killed the Chola king Rajaditya in battle at Takkolam near the present Arkonam and occupied the Chola country. It would appear that during this period—nearly 25 years—the capital of the Cholas was at Tiruvarur and not in Tanjore.

On the south wall of the central shrine are found two epigraphs relating to the 3rd and 4th regnal years of Aditya II. They may have been inscribed in 961 and 969 A.D., respectively. Aditya II, according to them, is credited with having beheaded the Pandya king. It is likely that

the event took place when the Pandya king invaded the Chola country and was beheaded after defeating him.

It was Rajraja I, the successor of king Uttama Chola who drove the Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas from the Chola kingdom. He was assisted by his son the great Rajendra Chola I. Rajendra fought the Gangas (of Mysore) and the Pandyas and subdued them both. There are four inscriptions referring to the 18th, 19th and 20th regnal years of this king. They were perhaps inscribed in the years 1029 to 1031 A.D. respectively. In them his invasions of Ceylon and Kerala, the defeat of Jayasimha Chalukya, Indraratha of Chandravamsha, Govinda Chandan, and of Dharmapala of Bengal, the deeds of his fleet in the mouth of the Ganges, the defeat of the king of Kataka (Burma) and of Katara (Andamans and Nicobars) are mentioned. He built a chatram in front of the temple and gave lands situated in Kilnathur and Tanripatri villages for its upkeep. It is also recorded that he remitted taxes on irrigated lands gifted to the temples in Madurantaka, Adayur and Tiruvannamalai. The chatram referred to in the epigraph no longer exists. It may have disappeared when other structures came into being during the enlargement of the temple by the kings who succeeded him. Rajendra Chola was also known as Parakesarivarma, Jayamgonda chola, Gangaikonda chola, Vijayarajendra, Virarajendra and so on. He ruled practically the whole of South India excluding Madura and Tinnevelly. Epigraph 110 refers to his 4th regnal year in which is recorded the gift of lands by Arapur Odeya Gangadeva Kannadai Perumal. This Gangadeva is evidently the Ganga king who was defeated by Rajendra and the gift was made in A. D. 1015. This epigraph is on the South wall of the Ekambaranatha shrine.

Rajendra Chola was succeeded by his son Rajadhiraja I. He had titles such as Rajakesarivarma, Kavirajakesari etc. The length of his reign makes us presume that, he, as crown prince, exercised the powers of the king from the time his father came to the throne. Hence his regnal years should be counted from A. D. 1012. Epigraph 82 refers to his 32nd regnal year or 1043 A. D., and in it is recorded gift of gold for the purchase of sandle paste for use during the Karthikai festival of the temple. Rajadhiraja I was killed in battle while fighting against the western Chalukyas at Kuppam on the bank of the Tungabhadra in 1052 A. D. His brother Rajendra Deva, who was also on the field of battle, was crowned king on the field of battle itself and he led the army to victory.

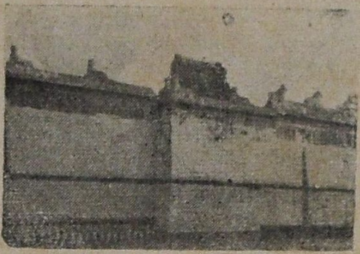
Rajendra Deva was succeeded by Rajamahendra, Virarajendra I, and Adhirajendra and each of them reigned for short periods. Adhirajendra was assasinated by a Chalukya prince called Rajaraja who was the grandson of the great Rajendra Chola I. Rajaraja's mother was the daughter of the great Rajendra Chola. Rajaraja Chalukya usurped the Chola throne in 1074 A. D. and he reigned under the name of Kulottunga I, until 1118 A. D. He was a very powerful king and under him the people were very prosperous. He was a Saiva and he built many temples. During his reign Saivism was at its height and the great Vaisnava reformer Ramanuja, who was Kulottunga's contemporary had to go out of the Chola kingdom and remain under the protection of the Kannada king Bitti Deva, better known as Visnuvardhana (1076 to 1128). Sri Ramanuja returned to his country only after the death of the Chola king. Kulottunga I was succeeded by Vikrama Chola, Kulottunga II and Rajaraja II, but no

epigraphs of theirs are to be found on the walls of the temple.

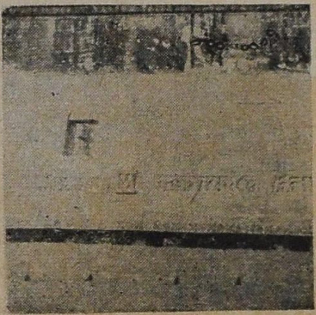
Epigraph 133, found on the wall to the right of entrance of Killi gopura mentions that Bhaskara Mantriendra, sou of Singanna Yejwai of Kashyapa Gotra, was responsible for the construction of the gopura. It would appear that this structure and the surrounding walls from it were built during the reign of Kullottunga I. It seems probable that the temple for the Goddess was also built then. It is difficult to assign a date for these construction, but one can say that they must have been built about the end of the 11th century. It is reasonable to suppose that the gopura mentioned above was named after the 'Kili Cholas' and popularly it is called 'Kili gopura' or parrot gopura, Kili being a corruption of the original.

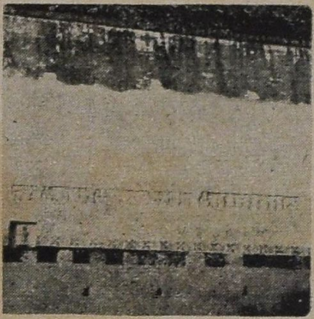
There are three inscriptions referring to Rajadhiraja II, alias Ediriliperumal. He succeeded Rajaraja II. Two of these were inscribed in 1175 A.D. and 1178 A. D. respectively and are found on the south and west walls of the Chidambereshwara Shrine. In one of them it is stated that a man called Kulathodian Nagan, belong to Kalayan Village on the bank of Vanakoppadi Pennai (Pennar), while hunting accidentally shot dead with his arrow one Pattudian Cholan. After the local assembly had investigated the case, the former was ordered to present 32 cows and one bull for the upkeep of a perpetual light in the temple to expiate the sin of homicide not amounting to murder.

Next is the reign of Kulottunga III. He was said to be a very good king. His titles were Virarajendra, Mudigonda Chola, Tribhuvana vira, etc. It is said that he built some Siva temples and renovated many others. There are about 26 epigraphs referring to his

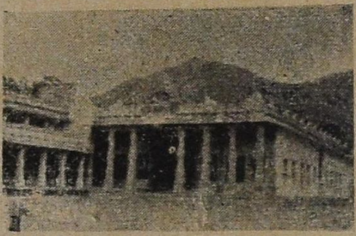


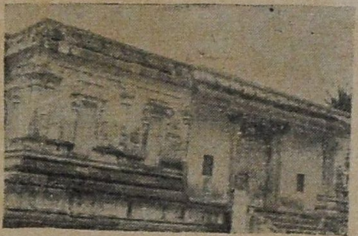
Southern wall of the 4th enclosure showing the old wall and its eastern extension.





Panels showing the Thambiran, his reception and the revival of the then Chola king's horse,
(These panels are on the southern wall of 4th enclosure.)





Kalyana Mantap and the Makarasankranti Mantap. The latter was built by king Krishna Deva Raya and the former by Natukottai Chettiars.

The Killi-gopura, and the mantap built by Mangayakkarasi.

Bhaskara Mantri and his wife.

Representation of Mangayakkarasi on the pillar in the mantap built by her.

Lingodbhava on the wall of Ekambaranatha shrine.

Stone trident in front of Pidari. Chidambereshwar shrine is seen in the background.

period from his 2nd to 35th regnal years. There was a severe famine during his reign in parts of the Chola country, particularly round about Arunachala. A reference to epigraph 151 shows that a lady by name Mangayakkarasi and her brother Napathi-ennayaram Pillai gifted away their jewellery, accumulated wealth, paddy, cattle and lands towards the cost of feeding of the afflicted poor humanity. Mangayakkarasi constructed a large tank for irrigation and in addition, dug a well in the temple and constructed a mantap in front of the central shrine for the use of the God and Goddess during festivals. Her constructions exist even to this day. This event happened in 1202 A. D. The temple authorities presented Mangayakkarasi and her brother with lands as 'Eripatti' in recognition of their services to the temple and the people. This brother and sister did much public good during the period of the famine, when rice was sold at one fourth measure per kasu. It is said that they constructed a dam accross a river and dug a tank. It is not known which dam is referred to but the tank is perhaps the one now called 'Samudram', which is about a couple of miles from the temple, on the Changam Road. In the year 1190 A. D., the same donors repaired Simhashwara tank and enjoined Toindiamma Nachiar daughter of Gangayer to keep the tank in good repair for which they gave lands. It is not known where this tank is.

During the reign of Kulottunga III, a prominent Bana Chieftain, often called Rajarajadeva Ponparappina Magadeshan ruling over Magadai Mandalam, not only gave three villages to Arunachala temple but also gilded the roof of the central shrine. This event was in the year 1211 A.D. In another epigraph dated 1188 A.D., by the Adigaman of Taghadur in Ganganadu (Eastern Mysore and Western

Salem) is mentioned the name of Hoysala Ballala (II) and that of his queen as "Chola Mahadevi". The Adigamans were under the aegis of the Cholas. The mention of Ballala II and the name of his queen "Chola Mahadevi" in the inscription implies a family relation between the Cholas and Hoysalas brought about by the diplomatic mediation of Rajarajadevan, Adigaman of Taghadur. The Adigaman presented the entire village of Malayanur to the Arunachala temple.

During the reign of Kulottunga III, magnificent gifts were given to Sri Arunachaleswara and the names of some of the donors and their gifts and the dates of donation are given below.

1. Kovanarkula - a devadasi - gave wet lands, a kalanji of gold and 32 cows and one bull for the upkeep of a lamp - 1180 A D.

2. Kudalarasa Narayana Alapirandan, alias, Virasekhara Kadava Rayan gave a necklace of very large pearls weighing 100 Kalanji. 1191 A. D.

3. Sunderasinga Prithvi Ganga Rayan, alias, Vania Mahadevan Alahiya Cholan gave lands in Kotrapadi. 1149 A. D.

4. Sedirayan Banarayan of Arahalur gave lands. 1189 A. D.

5. Vikramachola Sambuvarayan Ammaiappan Kannuda Perumal gave lands. 1189 A. D.

6. Nintra Perumal Kulottunga Chola Malayakula Rayan gave a necklace of 32 pearls, 32 Kalanji of gold and 19 Kalanji of gold wire. 1190 A. D.

7. Pavandittan Aharashooran Malayaman Odeyar, son of Vanakovarai Malayaman of Koval gave lands in the name of his mother Neelamma. 1196 A. D.

8. Immadi Chokka Perumal Morayada Rayan alias Kalideva, son of Mahadevan, gave lands in Mairanpalli in Shaliurpatru situated in the eastern portion of Moraishur (Mysore ?). This epigraph was recorded in 1196 A. D. This donor appears to be the grandson of King Bijjala of Kalachuria Dynasty (1156 to 1167 A. D.) which held a portion of the Chola country. The Kalachuria family lost their kingdom to Someshwara III in 1183 A.D. When the Chola country was retaken, Kalideva, who was perhaps a viceroy in that part of the country, became a vassal to the Chola king, hence the donation. Kalachurias were Saivites, The epigraph was recorded in 1196 A.D.

9. Malayan Narasinga Padman ruling over Adayur Nadu gave lands for the upkeep of the temple kitchen and a village called Vinaivendra Nallur for defraying the expenses of morning worship in the temple. 1203 A. D.

10 Arasakalyan Neelagangan Kariaperumal Odeyar gifted a village named Kumalyur and a tank for irrigating the lands there. 1203 A.D.

11. Tiruvarangan Odeyar Rajadhiraja Malayaman of Tirumadanpurai in Paramoor Nadu gave lands. 1203 A. D.

12. Sunderasinga Prithvi Gangan Odeyar of Bangala Nadu gave lands in Kotrapadi village. 1203 A. D. (The donor seems to be the same as noted in 3 above or a member of his family).

13. Innayanar gave lands to the twenty 'Tiruvidhi Andargal.' 1208 A. D.

14. Rajarajadeva Ponparapinan Vanakovarai of Aragahalur, gave lands and ordered that the income from certain lands and fines should be paid to the temple for worship. 1199 A D. (This donor must be the same Bana Chieftain who was in charge of Magadai Mandalam referred to above. He was in charge of Magadai Mandalam some time about the year 1211 A. D.)

15. Epigraphs 141 and 138 dated 1183 and 1198 A. D., respectively, seem to show that Trade Guilds of Dharma Vaniars (weavers) existed then. These guilds gave 1000 kuli of lands and 500 gold Kasu for feeding sadhus in Satyavachaka Dharma Vaniar Mutt, during the three festivals of the temple.

An interesting epigraph of this period is No. 106. It was perhaps inscribed in 1205 A. D. It is a record of a pact made by certain chieftains and local families against the Vanakovarai (Chieftain) ruling over Mahadainadu. The epigraph says that the following people formed the pact:— Sambuvarayan alias Pandinadukondan; Edirili Chole Sambuvarayan, alias, Singani Attimallan Virundan; Kulottunga Chola Sambuvarayan, alias, Attimallan Pallavandan; Kiliyoor Malayaman Periodeyar alias, Rajaraja Sedirayan, alias, Kiliyoor Aharashooran; Rajagambhira Sedirayan; Koodal Nambural, alias, Rajaraja Neelagangan; Ammaiappan Marundan, alias, Rajaraja Moovendra Ayyan; Pavandithan, alias, Rajendra Chola Sambuvarayan; Malayan Narasinga Padman, alias, Karikala Chola Adayoor Nadu Alwan; Soman Tiruvannamalai Odeyan, alias, Soman Maranduravan; and Sunderasinga Prithvi Gangan. These having conferred together inscribed these terms of agreement. "(1) We will carry out the orders of Sedirayan (Chedirayan) and be loyal to the king

(2) We shall have nothing to do, politically or socially, with the chieftain ruling over Mahadai Nadu, who is also called, Kulottunga Chola Vanakovarai, or with any others attached to him politically or socially. (3) If we act contrary to the above we are answerable to God. (4) We will be loyal to Sedirayan even if his rule goes against our private interests. (5) If any one is against Sedirayan or his rule, let us do away with him. (6) Let us all be united to do Sedirayan's work without any difference of opinion. (7) If any one among us is attacked by Kulottunga Chola Vanakovarai, alias, Rajaraja Kadavarayan, or he in any way harm us, we shall proceed against him with infantry and cavalry. (8) Let us not swerve from these conditions and if we do so, we shall humiliate ourselves by carrying the shoes of the lowest panchama serving under the Vanakovarai." This pact indicates that trouble was brewing in the latter part of the reign of Kulottunga III, and the trouble continued during the reign of Rajaraja III. The Vanakovari or Kadavarayan referred to in the pact appears to be Ko-perunjinga, the Pallava Chieftain under the Chola king.

During this period the families that gained prominence as feudatories are the following:—The Pallava family of Ko-perunjinga, first at Kudal (Cuddalore) and then at Sendamangalam south of Tirukoilur; immediately to the north of this region the Sambuvarayans (Champurayans), first at Tiruvallam and then at Vrinchipuram near Vellore; the Malayaman family in Koval (Tirukoilur); the family of Rajagambhira Rajya of Padaividu, sometimes called Sedirayans; the chieftains of Senji (Gingi); Gangeyas and Banarayas of a part of the Kanarese country. There was also the powerful chieftain Ghattideva of the family Yadavarayas near Tirupati and a Telugu Chola family

cheiftain Vijayaganda Gopala in Kanchi. These powerful chieftains interposed, as it were, between the Chola capital and the local administration and succeeded in casting into the background the authority of the Chola kings. The pact referred to above appears to have been contracted, by the Chola chieftains, rather to protect themselves against the powerful Pallava Ko-perunjina of Kudal, than really to help the Chola king and this became evident during the reign of Rajaraja III, when the former revolted against the later.

Ko-perunjinga bore other titles or names, viz., Perunjinga, Kadavarayan, Pallavar Vendan, Nissanka Mallan, Sakala Bhuvana Chakravarti and so on. We will hereinafter call him by the name of Perunjinga. He was a powerful man and he had three sons Solakon, Vena Odeyan and Neelagangan. His agents were his first two sons and some others such as, Tennavan Brahmarajan, Jayatunga Pallavarayan, Tikai Ambala Pallavarayan, Kudal Alapirandan Mogan and Kudal Alapirandan Arasunarayanan.

Rajaraja III, the Chola king ascended the throne in 1216 A. D. and he is said to have ruled for thirtyfive years. It is said that he was a good ruler and he was fond of attending temple festivals and listening to religious songs and discourses. He spent much time in such pursuits thus neglecting his duty as king with the result that his chieftains began to assume more and more power, day by day, and in a few years after he ascended the throne, the Sambuvarayans became independent. Perunjinga, who was waiting for an opportunity, marched against the king in 1221 A. D., defeated him at Tellaru, imprisoned him and his ministers and took possession of the country to which Tiruvannamali belonged. There are fourteen

inscriptions relating to the reign of Perunjinga in this temple, covering a period of 36 years. During the years Rajaraja was a prisoner, no inscriptions referring to his reign are found. In 1231 A. D., the Hoysala king Narasimha II, defeated Perunjinga and replaced Rajaraja on his throne. In spite of this, epigraphs of Perunjinga, with his titles as sovereign, continued to appear on the walls of the temple along with those referring to Rajaraja III. This fact makes it clear that there was confusion in this part of the country where some owed allegiance to Rajaraja and some others continued to be loyal to Perunjinga. Perunjinga and his two sons Solakon and Vena Odeyan, became famous for their services to the country and to temples. They gave magnificient gifts to Sri Arunachala temple. Epigraph 69, records the gifts and deeds of these three people. Perunjinga gave to Sri Arunachala ear ornaments, a crown set with gems, prabhavali, kalpavriksha, pearl bedecked canopy, cot bedecked with rubies and diamonds. To Unnamolai Devi he gave a cloth bedecked with gems; Subbramanya, His two devis and His peacock were covered over with gold jewels. Perunjinga's first son was a soldier and he captured Mallai, Mailài, Kanchi, Thandaka Nadu, Pali, Pennai and Koval. He drove the Karnatas from the west to the south; caused Telinganas to perish in the north; destroyed the fortifications of his enemies aud engraved his insignia of royalty on the mountains of the Tamil Chief Nannan. Perunjinga's second son Vena Odeyan, alais, Gangeyan, was a great builder. He built a mantap for Perumal, a Kolumantap and God's retiring room which he lined with gold. He built many other mantaps and made the vanquished kings carry stones to build steps leading to those mantaps. He laid the four main streets around the temple; built Gangeya Mutt for sadhakas and a tank

near it; Kadavakumaran tope; Ammai mantap and Ayyan Kolam for public use; Perumal well; Kadavakumaran's tank where lotuses grow; Malaigonada Perumal tank and a garden near it; Bharatamvalla Perumal tope; Virarayan tope; Nissankamallan tank etc; He presented Bhikshandava Murtis to the temple and gifted lands to the temple priests. There is no date on this epigraph and it is likely that these gifts were made between 1221 and 1231 A. D., when Rajaraja was kept a prisoner. Many of his mantaps and tanks may be seen about the temple and round Arunachala hill. The Ayyan Kolam and the Ammai mantap are in the Agraharam of the town, while the Kadavakumaran tank and the mantap are found behind the local Civil Hospital. In every one of his mantaps, on the pillars, are carved statuettes of his father, himself and brothers. In the perumal mantap, now called Poravi, in the temple, the pillars are beautifully carved and on those on the dais the statuettes of those persons are very fine. On the pillars below the dais statuettes of themselves and their wives are seen. Another beautiful mantap built by Vena Odeyan is just opposite the Ramanashram and opposite to it is a tank, now called Pali thirtha, the water of which is used to irrigate the Ashram garden. There is likewise a tank at the foot of the Arunachala hill and to the west of the temple. From this tank there is a covered conduit leading its water to Ayyan Kolam. The names of the tanks and the mantaps have all changed since and it is not now possible to identify all of them.

Some of the gifts to the temple during Perunjinga's period are: —

1. Neelaganga Rayan of Amoor gave 96 cows and three bulls. 30th July 1242 A. D.

2. Perunjinga gave a " Padakam " set with gems and weighing 322 pandargal. 1247 A. D. He gave plenty of lands in 1248 A. D

3. Orders of Perunjinga that all the produce of temple lands should be used only for the temple on pain of curses if used otherwise.—26th May 1255 A .D,

4. Gifts of cows and bulls by many people (whose names are noted in the inscription) in the proportion of 32 to 1,,—1256 A. D.

5. Nambirattiar Nachiar, wife of Perunjinga, gave gold vessels and gold ladles for the kitchen service. 20th June 1257 A. D.

6. Sedirayan Odeyar gave cows and bulls.—1260 A. D.

7. Rajagambhira Maharayan Odeyar, son of Manikkam, one of the devadasis of the temple, gave cows and bulls.—1260 A. D.

8. Marunda Pillai, Peruman of Tiruvannamalai, established and presented a flower garden. 1269 A. D.

9. Temple authorities sold to Nangai, a Pallava princess and wife of Neelaganga Rayan, a piece of land in the temple for ten thousand gold kasus, for building a shrine in her name. 6th April 1269 A. D. (It is likely that this lady was the wife of the third son of Perunjinga. The shrine, however, was not built due probably, to the confused state of affairs in the country.)

10. Kakumnayaka Deva, son of Madhusudhana Deva who is the brother of Vijayaganda Gopala of

Kanchi, gave cattle for maintaining a perpetual lamp. 1279 A. D. (This Vijayagauda Gopala referred to here seems to be the Telugu Pallava Chieftain of Kanchi who was defeated and killed by the Pandya king of the time, presumably Maravarma Kulasekhara.)

11 Orders of Perunjinga once again appear saying that those who do not carry out the dharma mentioned in the inscriptions will have certain curses on their heads. A variety of curses is noted 1274 A. D.

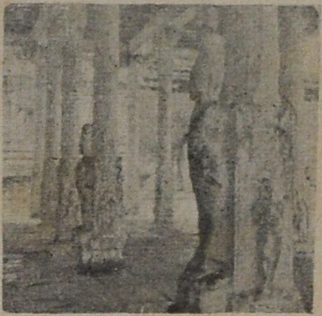
It is evident from these orders inscribed, that during his time, misappropriation of temple funds was occuring and he had to prevent it. Secondly, during his time there were only 24 devadasis (This number was increased as time went on as will be seen later). The son of one of these devadasis claimed legitimacy as being a prince of Rajaghambira Rajya. Thirdly, the shrine to be built and named after Nangai was not constructed. Lastly, as we have said above, Vena Odeyan laid out the four main streets around the temple.

Coming back to the period of Rajaraja III, we find about 21 epigraphs referring to his reign. The first is dated 1221 A. D. which is his fifth regnal year and in that it is recorded that two persons Kumanaraya Marundan and Alagiya Chola Muttianden, pledge themselves with oaths, never to leave the service of Prithvi Gangarayan and his officials. They confirm this by offering gifts to Pillaiar (Ganesha), in the temple. The date of this epigraph coincides with the revolt of Perunjinga. Some of the other interesting epigraphs are noted here:—

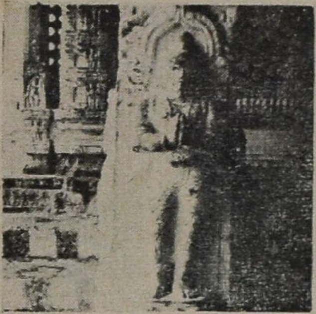
1. Orders of king Rajaraja that if the purpose of the donations and gifts is not fulfilled, certain curses will befall the defaulters. 1233 A. D.

Some of the structures built by Vena Odeyan

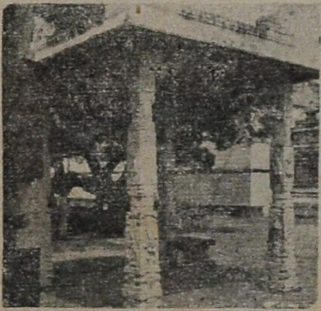
Perumal Mantap. (Poravi)



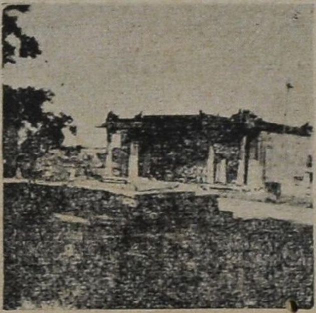
Statuettes on pillars inside the mantap.



Representation of Perunjinga on one of the four Pillars near Ganes Shrine. The other three pillars bear on each the representation of Vena Odeyan and his brothers.



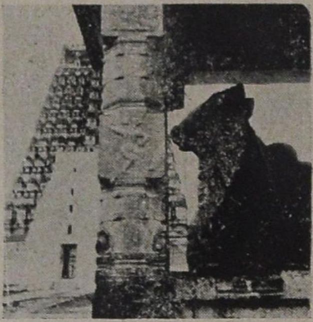
Pannir mantap.



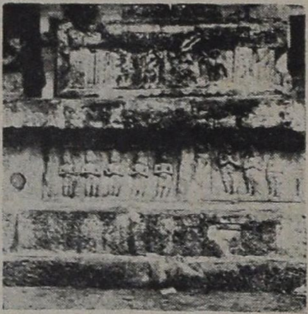
Nissankamalla Mantap. (Pali Mantap.)

Some of the structures built by King Ballala

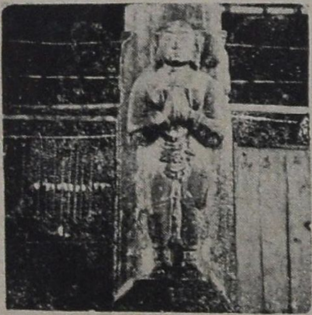
Nandi built by King Ballala.



A pillar showing the Ganda-bherunda emblem of the Hoysalas.



King Ballala and his ministers on the basement of the Nandi.



The Queen of Vira Ballala on the pillar of a mantap found outside the temple.

Siva and Parvati, the Ishta Devata of the queen; this panel is found on the pillar opposite in the same mantap.

2. Tirupadi Jayapalan Tondan, Son of Mananjeri Kodachiar Devanral, gave 10,000 kasus for repairs to the temple. 1233 A. D.

3. Komalavalli, daughter of Vilvarayan Odeyar of Kalahasti, made provision for a perpetual lamp. 1233 A. D.

4. Virachola Attimallan Sambuvarayan Ayyan, Edirili Sambuvarayan, gave cattle. 1235 A.D.

5. Managayakkarasi and her brother repaired all tanks round about Tiruvannamalai. 1236 A.D.

6. Sedirayan, Odeyar of Tiruvannamalai, gave lands. 1237 A.D.

7. Vena Odeyan, younger brother of Solakon, a Mudali of Perunjinga, gave cattle. 12th December 1245 A D. (Vena Odeyan, in his epigraph refers to the regnal year of Rajaraja III, instead of the one of his own father Perunjinga. This leads us to believe that the son went over to the side of the Chola king Rajaraja in that year.)

8. Lakshmana Deva gave lamps, a flower garden and lands. 1246 and 1248 A.D.

From the above inscriptions it is seen that there was misappropriation of temple funds. Secondly, Vena Odeyan changed sides perhaps because he felt convinced that his father was wrong in his revolt against the Chola throne. Thirdly, repairs to tanks and the temple were carried out. Lastly, some of the Sambuvarayanas still owed alligiance to the Chola king.

It is said that Rajendra Chola III, who is supposed to be the brother of Rajaraja III, was recognised as heir-apparent

in the year 1246 A. D., and crowned king in 1251 A. D. He ruled for nearly ten years and tried to retrieve the Chola position against odds. He was the last of the Chola kings and there is only one inscription referring to his fifth regnal year - 1256 A. D., by Simhana Danda Nayaka, alias, Manumahapradhana Munali Karia Marayan. He presented a village called Magalampudi for the merit of his maternal uncle Kampayya, after his conquset of Prithvi Gangarayan.

With Vjayalaya we find a new Chola dynasty rising into power, followed by the Chalukya-Chola dynasty of Kulottunga I. It then began to decline and ended with Rajendra Chola III. All that remains now to remind us of the great Cholas are the magificent temples which they built in their kingdom, most of which exist to this day.

During the early part of the reign of Rajaraja III, part of the Chola country was caught between the rebellious Perunjinga in the north and the aggression of the Pandyas in the south. The Hoysala king Narasimha II had a family relationship with the Chola king, and he came to the latter's rescue, and put him on his throne again. At that time Narasimha II and his son Someshwara, found it necessary to establish themselves in the south to help the Cholas, and with that idea Hoysala Someshwara was kept at Kannanur or Vikramapura, about five miles from Srirangam, on the opposite bank of the Cauvery River. This action of the Hoysalas increased the hatred of the Pandyas against them. Someshwara had to strive hard to keep the Pandyas out of the Chola country. This effort of Someshwara actually strengthend the position of the Hoysalas and later Narasimha III encircled the Pandya country and even set up a pillar of victory at Rameshwaram.

Earlier, the great Pandya king, Jatavarma Sundara Pandya, has had a successful campaign in the Chola country

in the north. Against him and Perunjinga, Hoysala Someshwara had figured prominently. The Hoysalas during the period of Narasimha III, had regained parts of the territory and in addition to Kannanur, they established another capital at Kundani, or Hesar Kundani in Konga Nadu. (It is said that the present Hosur was formerly called Hesar Kundani). Jatavarama Sundera Pandya's reign was followed by that of Maravarma Kulasekhara who ruled from 1268 A. D. Vira Pandya, a son of Kulasekhra, was fighting at the borders of Konganadu, and he seems to have been installed in authority in A. D., 1292, about the time when Vira Ballala III ascended the Hoysala throne at Dwarasamudram. It was Vira Ballala that succeeded in bringing together the Tamil and the Kannada portions of Hoysala territory into one empire. The generals of Maravarma Kulasekhara, whether they were his sons or others, had to fight the Hoysalas. About the year 1039 A. D., the Hoysala army was fighting Vira Pandya in the southern frontier of Konganadu. It is thus that their position in South India got complicated and paved the way for the Muslim invasion. It is said that Sundara Pandya, the son of Maravarma, usurped the throne after murdering his father and defeating his brother. He was later defeated by his brother and Sundara Pandya then fled to Dehli for Muslim aid. Little did that prince realise that by his action he was playing into the hands of the Muslims and they did not rest content till they, under Mallik Kafoor, subdued the Pandyas and occupied the country. Mallik Kafoor after plundering Dwarasamuduram in 1310 A. D., proceeded south through the Kannada country (Bangalore), and the southern borders of Konganadu to Madura and even to Rameshwaram. On his way he plundered Chidambaram, Srirangam, Madura and Rameshwaram. The next year he returned to Dehli with, it is said, 350 elephant-loads of treasure in addition to other

material. The Muslims in Madura were under Jalaluddin Asan Shah and he in 1335 A. D., declared independence. Kampanna Odeyar, a Vijayanagar Prince, dislodged and drove the Muslims from South India in 1370 A. D., and reestablished Hindu sovereignity in these regions.

The country around Tiruvannamalai, as evidenced by the inscriptions in the temple, was occupied by Pandyas for some time. Thereare three epigraphs of Maravarma Kulasekhara II, alias, Parakrama Pandya Deva, who has been referred to above. The inscriptions refer to his 7th, 16th, and 20th regnal years, i.e., 1275, 1284, and 1288 A. D. respectively. Another epigraph (No. 162) refers to the 22nd regnal year of Sri Vallabha, who is perhaps Maravarma Sri Vallabha, who ascended the Pandya throne in 1312 A. D., and the date of the epigraph would then be 1334 A. D. It is likely that he was on friendly terms, as his vassal, with the Hoysala king Vira Ballala III, and was responsible for helping him in the construction of certain enclosure walls and 'Katte' gopura in the temple about which reference will be made later.

The Chola country passed into the hands of the Hoysala Vira Ballala. There are two inscriptions which refer to his reign. Epigraph 99, is dated 4th January 1341 A. D., and records the gift of 1700 Kuli lands near Nattan Eri, on the south bank of the Cheyyar river in Agharam Pallipadi, (Polur Taluk). This part of the empire was under Vallappa (Ballappa) Dandanayaka, brother of Mahapradhana Dati Singa Dandanayaka. The other epigraph, No. 89, records the gift of lands, by the same donor, to 52 brahmins of the village Agraharam Rupanarayana Chaturvedi Mangalam, on the South bank of the Cheyyar River. Vallappa Dandanayaka seems to have resided in Tiruvannamalai while he was the Viceroy or Chieftain ruling over this part of the Hoysala

empire. King Ballala built a gopura named after himself and enclosure walls from it to form the third enclosure and he installed a Nandi in front of the gopura.

A brief history of this king will be of some interest since he chose Tiruvannamalai as one of his capitals.

King Vira Ballala III ascended the Hoysala throne at Dwarasamudra (Halebidu) on the 31st January 1292 A. D. He had various capitals in his territory, one at Kundani (in Salèm), another at Arunasamudra or Unnamolai Pattana (Tiruvannamalai) and a third at Hosapattaua (in Bellary), which later became the famous Vijayanagar, now in ruins. There is evidence to show that in 1339, A. D., King Ballala was ruling from Hosapattana, it being his 'Nelevidu' or residential capital. There is a story current in Tiruvannamalai about him. It is said that he was very devoted to Sri Arunachala and very keen on serving the devotees of Siva. It is on that account that he resided in this town for fairly long periods during his reign The story further relates that Lord Siva, with a view to making the world know about the devotion of the king, assumed the guise of a mendicant and brought with him a group of his disciples. The chief mendicant and his men, came to the king who received them well and after feeding them, asked them what more he could do for them. The chief mendicant replied that he was pleased with what the king had done for them and requested him to allow each of them the company of a devadasi that night. The king immediately ordered that the request of the Chief mendicant be fulfilled. The orders were carried out, but it was found that there was one davadasi short of the required number. The king was informed of this and he felt very sorry about it. At that time the two queens of the king were residing with him, Mallamma the senior and Sallamma the junior. The latter realising the plight of the

king and to relieve him of his sorrow, sought his permission to offer herself and the king gave his consent. The young queen thereupon went into the chamber where the chief mendicant was and found him fast asleep. She waited for some time, lost in thought, and later touched him to awaken him and to her astonishment she found the mendicant transformed into a young baby which started crying loudly. The queen was startled out of her wits, but the maternal instinct in her made her lift the baby in her arms. She was over-come with ecstatic joy and called the king into the room and told him the story, first putting the baby into his arms. The king, in his turn was astonished and strange as it may sound, the baby in his arms vanished! At the same time a voice from the air was heard saying " You have no children. I therefore came thus and vanished. I shall henceforth perform your obsequies or 'Shradha' ceremony, eyery year, after your deatn". The voice ceased, and the king and queen saw before them Lord Sri Arunachaleshwara, seated on a bull. He garlanded them both and vanished "

This story, to say the least, has no truth in it. But, there is no doubt that the king was a devout Saiva and the various additions he built to enlarge the temple proves it. It is true that every year in the month of Masi (February), the ceremony of the obsequies of the king is conducted. It opens by reading the news of king Ballala's death in front of the image of Sri Arunachala and then the image is carried in procession to the village of Pallikonda Pattu for the performance of the king's obsequies. . The Gurukals or archakas of the temple say that the image from the temple is taken to the stream at that village for 'thirthavari' or sacred bath. If the latter version is correct where is the need of reading the news of the king's death, in front of the temple image, before the ceremony begins? Though the ceremony, with the lapse of

nearly 600 years, is now reduced to its present form, the fact remains that it is in connection with king Ballala's death. It must be said here that king Ballala was 80 years of age when he led his army personally against the Muslims in the south and he marched out from Tiruvannamalai. It is more than likely that he felt that he and his sons would not return alive from the campaign and therefore he made provision, in the temple, for his obsequies after his death. He did actually meet with his end, in that campaign, on or about the 8th September 1342 A. D. It must have taken some time before the news of his death reached Tiruvannamalai owing to the confusion that must have prevailed after the campaign.

The belief that king Ballala had no childeren is incorrect. He had two sons ; the eldest was Virupaksha, alias, Hampi Odeya and the second was Thipparasa, alias, Bhairava Deva. He was also called Thippanna. The king had a daughter who was married to Mahapradhana Machiah Dandanayaka, one of his ministers. Virupaksha was taken as a hostage to Dehli when Mallik Kafoor raided Dwarasamudra in 1310 and was released in 1313 A. D. He was appointed as Crown Prince in 1340 A. D., by king Ballala himself in Hosapattana. The second son Thippanna was a viceroy or chieftain at Sosevooru, the birth place of the Hoysalas. In an epigraph dated 1359 A. D., (Epi : Carn : Vol. VI) it is stated that Vira Bukkanna Odeyar,. when he was at Vijayanagar, asked Tippanna if he would take up an appointment elsewhere, but Thippanna was unwilling to leave Sosevooru. He was perhaps satisfied to remain where he was, the place of his ancestors.

Again it appears erroneous to say that king Ballala had two queens In an epigraph (Epi : Carn : Vol. IV, Krishnarajapet 40.) dated 1335 A. D., a queen of Vira Ballala is mentioned but unfortunately, her name is effaced.

On the Ballala gopura over the western entrance there is an image of king Ballala and by his side there is only one queen. Then aghin, in the sixteen-pillar mantap outside the temple, in which are now seen petty shops, the second pillar on the south bears on it the 'Ganda-berunda' emblem of the Hoysalas and facing north there is a beautiful statuette of Ballala's queen standing on a projecting platform supported by lion heads. She appears to be past her middle age and she stands with her hands folded in supplication in front of her 'Ishtadevata' which is carved on the opposite pillar. The 'Ishtadevata' consists of a Nandi on which are seated Siva and Parvati Thus it is seen that king Ballala had only one queen and if he had another, she too would have had a place of prominence as the other queen has had. Hence the story current in the town is baseless.

The Hoysalas and the Yadhavas of Devagiri were always at war with each other. The Yadhava kingdom was, more or less, a buffer state between the Muslims and the Hoysalas. The wars between them weakened both sides and in 1294 A.D., Jalaluddin attacked Devagiri and compelled the king to pay tribute to the Sultan of Delhi. In 1309 A.D., Mallik Kafoor, a general of Allauddin Khilji, Sultan of Delhi, defeated king Prataparudra of Devagiri and in 1310 A.D., he attacked Dwarasamudra defeated king Ballala, took him and his son prisoner, looted the capital and the surrounding country and returned to Delhi literally laden with treasure. King Ballala was set at liberty but his son Virupaksha was taken to Delhi perhaps as a hostage. Virupaksha was releasd three years later and he returned to Dwarasamudra on the 6th May 1313 A.D. This event was commemorated in an inscription, the king gratefully remitting the taxes to God Ramanatha at Kudali (Srirangapattana in Mysore). After the first invasion, the city of Dwarasamudra was rebuilt about

the year 1316, but as late as 1318 A.D., the king was residing in Tiruvannamalai. The second invasion of Dwarasamudra by the Muslims was in 1326 A.D, during the reign of Muhammad Tughlak, when the city was completely destroyed. King Ballala retired to Tonnur near Srirangapattana and thence to Arunasamudra (Tiruvannamalai). It would appear that during the last fifteen years of his reign, he was constantly in residence in Tiruvannamalai.

Some of the elderly people of the town told the writer that a few ruined walls of king Ballala's palace stood, until about fifty years ago, about a mile to the east of the temple, but now no trace of them is to be seen. The land there has been levelled and is under cultivation and the railway line from Villupuram runs through the land. It is said that king Ballala chose Tiruvannamalai as his capital because it was, more or less, the centre of his kingdom and the main road to the south, in those days, passed through this town. King Ballala marched from here to Kannanur-koppam, near Srirangam, attacked the Muslims in August 1342 A.D., and defeated them. The Muslims retreated and asked for terms of surrender. The king asked for the surrender of Madura. The Muslims under the pretext of obtaining sanction from their headquarters asked for time. King Ballala was graciously pleased to grant them fifteen days time, a mistake which he paid for dearly. During those two weeks the Muslims rallied their forces and on a certain night they made a surprise attack on the unprepared Hindu army causing confusion and flight. King Ballala was caught by the Muslims and they carried him away to Madura where he was executed and his skin stuffed with straw was hung on the fort wall there. This event took place on or about the 8th September 1342 A.D., Ibn Batuta, an Arab traveller who was with the Muslims in

Madura at the time, saw the stuffed skin of the king on the fort wall, condemned such acts in narrating the incident in the book on his travels.

King Ballala it is said, treated his provincial governors and nobles of his court with due respect, in order to create in them such confidence as to make it impossible to have any internal dissensions. When he lived in Tiruvannamalai in 1328 A. D., he had with him seven nobles of his court. They were :—

1. Bimaraya.
2. Katora Hara.
3. Simha Raghunatha.
4. Kala Megha.
5. Vira Shantha Baichaiah Dandanayaka.
6. Dati Singa Dandanayaka.
7. Ballappa Dandanayaka.

King Ballala bestowed on each of them the rank of a Ruler and thus took them into his confidence. They formed his cabinet. Ballappa Dandanayaka and Dati Singa Dandanayaka were the sons of Dati Somayya Dandanayaka, a prince of the royal blood. (Mysore Arch : Report 1913—14). This information is found in an inscription dated 1339 A.D., and presumably they were king Ballala's nephews. Ballappa Dandanayaka later became a Mahamandaleshwara or Viceroy under Harihara I, king of Vijayanagar, whose daughter he married.

To the east of Killigopura and in front of it is a Nandi installed on a pedestal in a mantap. This was installed by king Ballala. His figure is carved on the right hand pillar of the mantap and the emblem, Ganda-berunda, of the Hoysalas is carved on the left hand pillar. Vira Ballala wore a beard and whiskers. His statuette found in the niche

in Ballala gopura further shows him as an old man. On the pedestal below the Nandi, facing west, are seen eight men in two groups. They represent the king, 'and his seven nobles. The group containing three appears to represent the king, Ballappa Dandanayaka and his brother Dati Singa Dandanayaka. These two being the nephews of the king, apparently got the place of honour near him, whereas the other five are seen in a separate group.

Eleven months after the death of the King Ballala, i.e., in 1343 A. D., his son Virupaksha was crowned king (Ballala IV.) It is not known how long he ruled or what happened to him. He was eclipsed, so to say, by Vira Hariappa Oedyar or Harihara I, a general of King Ballala, stationed at Hosapattana. Even in 1340 A. D, at the time of Virupaksha's appointment as crown prince, Harihara was given prominence by King Ballala. Harihara and his brothers Kampa, Bukka, Marappa and Muddappa belonged to a Kuruba Family and they laid the foundation of the Vijayanagar Kingdom. In this new kingdom, Bukka or Bukkanna was in charge of the central, Marappa was in the western, Kampa was in the eastern and Harihara was in the northern regions. Bukkanna was planning subjugation of the South and he sent his son Kampanna against the Sambuvarayans. After subjugating them in 1360-61 A. D., he prepared himself and attacked the Muslims in 1370 A. D., and drove them out of South India and established Hindu rule once again. The Hoysala empire, after Vira Ballala, quite peacefully became the Vijayanagar Empire under Harihara I and Bukka I.

In the temple there are over thirteen epigraphs pertaining to the Vijayanagar period covering over two centuries-1374 to 1578 A. D., including those of the Nayaks of Tanjore who were subordinate to the Vijayanagar kings. At least four

ruling kings of Vijayanagar visited the temple and they are, Praudha Deva Raya, Vira Narasimha, Krishna Deva Raya and Achyuta Raya. The following seem to have been viceroys in charge of this part of the empire, before they became kings of the Vijayanagar Kingdom:—Praudha Deva Raya, Vira Virupanna Odeyar (Bukka II), Vira Vijaya Bhupati, Mallikarjuna and Saluva Narasimha. Vira Narasimha's inscriptions are not found in the temple, but his visit to the shrine is known from an inscription elsewhere and is dated 1506 A. D. It records that he visited and gave presents to the following temples:—Kanakadasa (Chidambaram), Virupaksha (Hampi), Kalahasti, Venkatadri (Tirupati), Kanchi (Conjivaram), Sri Sailam, Nandithirtham, Nivritti, (These three are in the Kurnool district), Harihara and Ahobila in Mysore Province, Sangama (Raichoor), Sri Rangam, Khambagona (Kumbakonam) Gokarna, Ramasetu (Rameshwaram), and Sona Sailam (Tiruvanuamalai). (Epi Ind 64.)

It is gathered from Maduravijaya by Ganga Devi, Consort of Kamparaya. the prince of Vijayanagar who defeated the Muslims, that the viceroys of the Vijayanagar kingdom were stationed at Virinchipuram, the capital of Mulavagil or Mulavayil Rajya, on the bank of the Palar river and members of the royal family were always chosen for the post. Mulavagil Nadu consisted of the present Kolar, North and South Arcot Districts and Salem District.

The earliest epigraph, in the temple, referring to Vijayanagar rule is that of Jammanna Odeyar and is dated 17th December 1374 A. D. Jammanna Odeyar was the son of Kamparaya, and the grandson of Bukka Raya I. He gave lands for 'Veda Adhyayanam' (Recitation of the Vedas), for the spiritual wellbeing of his deceased father Kamparaya Odeyar This Kamparaya or Kampanna is the one who was

famous for driving the Muslims out of South India. The next epigraph is dated the 30th June 1377 A. D , referring to the reign of Harianna Odeyar (Harahara II-1376 to 1404 A.D ,) records the grant of paddy, cloth and 600 kasu annually to Ballala-gopura Subrahmanya for niavedyam, etc. Harihara II is the brother of Kamparaya and came to the throne because the latter predeceased Bukka Raya I, the father.

There are three inscriptions of Vira Virupanna Odeyar, son of Harihara II. One is dated 1st January 1389 A. D., in which is recorded the gifts of lands for 'Veda Adhyayana' on the day of the 'Shraddha' ceremony for the merit of Kamparaya or Kampanna. The second is dated 22nd June 1388 A. D., recording remission of taxes on temple lands. The third one which is dated 8th October 1389 A. D., records gift of lands to the temple.

There are two inscriptions referring to the rule of Vira Vijaya Bhupati Raya, son of Vira Deva Raya I One of them is dated 5th January 1413 A. D., and refers to a gift of cattle by Annadata Odeyar, a minister of Bhupati Raya and the other dated 7th December 1418 A. D., records the order of Vijaya Bhupati Raya that no distinction must be made, in Tiruvannamalai, between the so called 'right hand' and 'left hand' sections of people. They should have the same temple honours of carrying the Mace, Whisk, Umbrella, etc., during the temple festivals.

Bhupati Raya was succeeded by Praudha Deva Raya or Deva Raya II (1422 to 1449). There are two inscriptions recorded by him and the second one bears his sign manual 'Virupaksha'. In the first he ordered that a certain number of men from a group of villages belonging to Padaividu Rajya and of Tiruvannamalai Pettai should take part in carrying the images of Nayanars during the utsavams of the

temple deities. If they failed to go with the procession as 'Parivaram', a fine of 120 Ponn (Gold Coins) was to be paid into the Royal Treasury. The date of this epigraph is not noted. The second epigraph is dated 10th October 1435 A D. and it is in the Kannada language engraved in the Tamil script. It is an order which says that Nayana, a Tuluva Shanbhogue (Kanaka Pillai) of Tiruvannamalai was held responsible for the death of some mendicants or Bhairagis and for that offence his property, consisting of seven villages with hereditary rights, was confiscated in lieu of a fine and those seven villages, whose names are noted in the epigraph, were gifted to the Goddess Unnamolai, in the name of Deva Raya's queen Gowri, who acted as the king's representative. From this inscription it would appear that there were one or more Tuluva Families in this part of the empire and that Deva Raya II had another queen by name Gowri who was a Saiva.

Srikanta Sastri, in his article on Deva Raya II, refers to Simhala Devi (Annala Devi.?) as queen, who with the king, built the Hazari Ramswami temple in Vijayanagar or Hampi. She must therefore have been a Vaishnava, and Deva Raya very tolerant in his views on maters of faith, for he was himself a Saiva. Hence it would appear that king Devaraya II had two queens, Simhala Devi and Gowri.

Srikanta Sastri further says that Deva Raya II was the greatest of the kings of the first dynasty of Vijayanagar. Before he became the king he was Viceroy of Mulavagil Nadu. He had in his court at Vijayanagar great scholars, and among them were Srinatha and Arunagari Dindima The latter, it is said, was a native of Mullandram, near Vellore He had a Jain minister whose name, according to Sastri, was Iruguppa Dandanatha. Perhaps he is the same person, named Sambandandan, who was

associated with Arunagirinatha and Deva Raya II in Tiruvannamalai. Arunagirinatha must have been a brahmin because Mullandran, in those days, was a village occupied by Dikshits or brahmins well versed in the Vedas. It is more than likely that this man was the same whose life and association with king Devaraya has been mentioned in Chapter II above.

In the first quadrangle of the temple, the large Nandi in front of the Ballala gopura was installed by king Devaraya II. On the pillars of the mantap enclosing this Nandi are seen the statuettes of Deva Raya and his queen Gowri. There are several other such statuettes on the walls of Sundereshwara and Subbramanya shrines. Both these shrines are on the left and on the right of the Ballala gopura. A good representation of the king and queen, standing together is seen on the pillar to the right of the Kambath-ilayanar shrine.

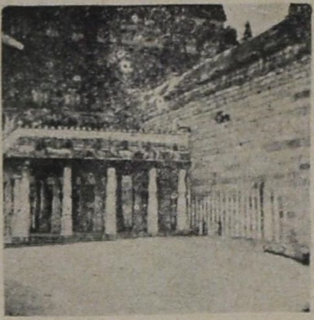
There is one epigraph which refers to the reign of king Mallikarjuna (1449 to 1465 A. D.). It is dated 8th July 1450 A. D., and records the gift of a village to the temple by Kondinjenri Vaniar Alaga Perumal Tirumudali Odeyar.

There are three epigraphs relating to the reign of king Krishna Deva Raya (1506 to 1530 A. D.). The first is dated 16th July 1510 A.D., which records gifts of lands to 'Virupakshadeva' for 'Kodai Maniam' by Veerasinga Deva son of Koneri Nayaka. The second and third are by Krishna Deva Raya himself, one in Tamil and the other in Telugu. They are dated 6th January 1516 A. D. The following is the translation of the epigraph in Telugu with the laudatory titles of the king omitted for brevity.

"Sri Virapratapa Vira Krishna Deva Maharaya started from Vijayanagar on an eastern expedition, captured Vedagiri fort and Ravutha Raya Maha Patro was taken prisoner; he then, during that expedition, captured Addanki, Vinukonda,

Bellamkonda, Nagarjuna konda, Tengaidu, Kethavaram and other hill forts and fortresses. He also captured Kondavidu fort by scaling the walls. He captured alive Veerabhadra Raja son of Prataparudra Gajapati; Narahari Kidi Deva, son of Harihara Humveera Patro; Raichur Mallu Khan; Uddanda Khan; Janniala Kesava Patrudu; Pusapatirasi Raju; Sripati Raju and Paschima Balachandra Maha Patro In addition to these, he captured many other powerful leaders among Patros and others. He assured them their lives and made them his vassals by returning to them their kingdoms and strongholds. To commemorate these events he weighed himself against gold and jewellery at Dharanikota-Amaravati and distributed that wealth in alms. He then returned to Vijayanagar to rule over his empire in happiness. He started again for his conquests and arrived at Bezwada for an expedition against the Kalinga country. He captured Kondapalli fort, caught and held prisoner Praha Raju, Sarachandra Maha Patro, Bodojana Maha Patro, Bijli Khan and others during this single expedition. He caputred Anantagiri, Undrukonda, Ullugonda, Aravapalli, Jalipalli, Gandikonda, Coppalavayi, Nallakonda, Khambumettu, Kanakagiri, Sankaragiri and other Telingana forts. He came to Simhadri-Potnuru, erected a column of victory, weighed himself against gold and distributed that wealth in alms. He then came to Rajamahendry where he was received by his queens Chinnadevi and Tirumaladevi and they jointly weighed the king against gold which they gave away in alms. They then returned to Vijayanagar. They came to Tirunomalai on Monday, pushya bahula triodashi, Dhatu year of Salivahana Shaka 1438,(6th January 1516). They obtained darshan of Unnamolainatha Siva and Unnamolai Nacharamma. They presented the following to Siva :—One gold padakum set with gems, one gold Nagabharanam, one gold danda (staff), one gold Bahupuri, one lace cloth, one Prabhavali, one Indra Vimana

The Eastern Gopura, built by Krishna Deva Raya.

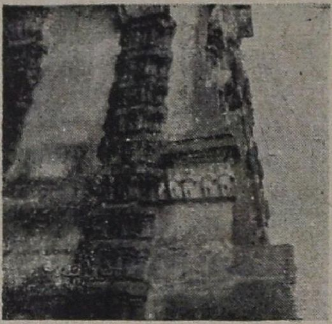


Chitra Mantap.

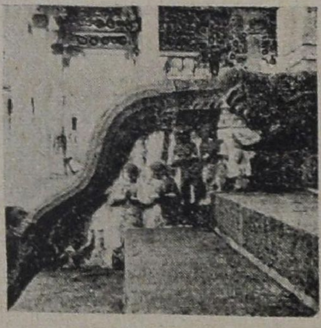
Inscription of Ramamudaliar.

Statuettes in one of the panels on the outermost wall.

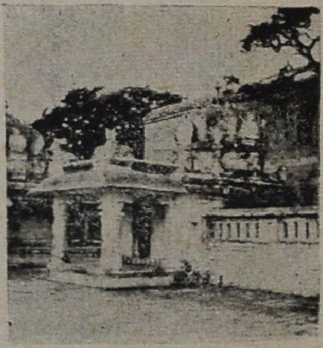
Some of the structures built by Sevvappa Naik



Panel showing four persons and a boy on the Southern gopura.



Figures of four persons and a boy in the mantap opposite the Ganesa Shrine.



Vidyeshwara Linga Shrine on the pillars of which are seen four persons and a boy.

It is likely that the persons referred to above are Sevvappa, his sons and grandson.

one gold pot for carrying 'Abhisheka water' and a second spare gold pot. He had the 'Trishula' or Trident of Siva plated with gold. In token of further services to Siva, he built the eastern gopura of eleven storeys, the thousand pillared mantap, and in front of it he constructed a tank for use during "Vasanta Teppa Tirunal" and to get water to this tank he constructed an underground waterway leading to it from Tirumalai Sivamma Samudram. He built 'Makarasankranti Mantap' and another one for use during other festivals. He presented a chariot to Ganesh. The door-frames and doors under the Vena Odeyan's gopura and the door-frames and door constructed by Uttama Chola were covered over with brass sheets. He plated the doors and door-frames of the Devi's shrine and those of 'Chanda Perumal Siva' shrine. In front of the mantap he dug a well called Aramudu well. He made arrangements for daily 'Panchamrita Abhisheka' to Siva, and specified certain quantities of rice and condiments for daily naivedyam and certain quanities of camphor, incense, etc., for use during the daily pooja in the temple To add to the relative importance and grandeur of the daily poojas, the services of the following were made available to from a procession—Ten brahmins to carry 'Abhisheka' water; two to chant hymns, two to chant mantras near the palanquin in which the image of Siva is carried headed by 60 devadasis accompanied by an adequate number of pipers, drummers, etc.

From this epigraph it is inferred that Krishna Deva Raya constructed many buildings in the temple and directed that the poojas should be performed in a befitting manner. Most of the edifices he built exist today and a reference to some of these will be made in the next chapter. The increase in the number of devadasis, referred to above, can be inferred from this inscription.

There are two epigraphs relating to the period of Vira Sadasiva Raya (1542 to 1570 A. D.). One is dated 27th July

1567, recording the orders of the king that no taxes are to be levied on the lands given by Chera, Chola, and Pandya kings, Hoysala Ballala Raja, Somayya Dandanayaka and Vira Achyuta Raya to the Devadasis living in the eastern and western streets. The other is dated 7th September 1548 A.D., recording a gift of land and cash for the purchase of Civet for pooja. The donor's name is Odinayaka, son of Senumanayaka.

The rest of the epigraphs, about ten in number, refer to the rule of the Nayaks of Tanjore, Sevvappa and his son Achyutappa, who were subordinate to the Vijayanagar kings. Some of them refer to the regnal years of the then kings of Vijayanagar.

Epigraph 419 of '28 of 1572 A. D., is in verse praising Sevvappa Nayak and the eleven storeyed gopura which leaves us with the impression that Sevvappa built it at the suggestion of two Tapaswis, Sivanesa and Lokanatha.

Epigraph 424 of '28 of 1574 A. D. mentions the name of Sri Ranga Deva, king of Vijayanagar (1574 to 1586 A. D), as the over lord and says that the eleven storeyed gopura was built by Sevvappa Nayak.

Epigraph 425 of '28 of 1572 A. D., records that Sevvappa's son Achyutappa Nayak installed golden pinnacles on top of the gopura.

Epigraph 423 of '28, of 1574 A. D., mentions the Vijayanagar king Sri Ranga Deva and records that Sivanesan and Annaiappa Pillay were treasurers of the temple and that they called a meeting of the inhabitants of the town for the payment and collections of certain taxes of which 25% was to be given to Amarapati Katte Pillaiar shrine for pooja expenses; 50% to be paid for pooja expenses incurred on account of Sonachala Pillaiar, and the balance to be utilised for the maintenance of a flower garden for the merit of Sevvappa Nayak.

In epigraph 423 of '28, it is recorded that Annaiappa Pillai was a renowned ascetic—'Sarwa tapaswi loka mahita'—and is the same person mentioned in the epigraph 419 of '28.

In epigraph 420 of '28, of 1572 A. D., is recorded that Thandavan celebrated the Avani Moola day and built the Manimantapam and dug or repaired a tank in Arunachala. It also records that Ellan Kalingan established certain images at Sonagiri, Tillai, Kadavooru, Aiyyanuru, Kachchi and Verur.

Epigraph 421 of '28 of 1570 A. D., records the reign of King Tirumala Raya (1564 to 1574 A. D.), of Vijayanagar, who had his capital at Penukonda (in Anantapur). This epigraph was inscribed six years after the battle of Tallikota or Rakshatangadi. The text of the inscription denotes orders of collection and remission of certain taxes.

Epigraph 426 of '28 by Achyutappa Nayak, refers to the reign of Venkata Deva or Venkata I, king of Vijayanagar (1586 to 1616 A. D.), and records taxes fixed on the Manradis living in the eastern street at two panams per Talai Kattu and one panam for Kudippanam per annum.

After the battle of Tallikota, disintegration of the empire began, and the capital had to be changed from Penukonda to Chandragiri (Chittoor Dist.), and lastly to Vellore (North Arcot Dist). During that period of struggle, the Nayaks of Tanjore and Madura were almost independent though they pretended to be loyal to the Vijayanagar kings. Actually the downfall of this great empire was brought about by them.

In two of the epigraphs which praise Sevvappa it is stated that it was he that built the eleven storeyed gopura, but this does not seem to be correct. It will be interesting to discuss whether he or Krishna Deva Raya built it.

Sevvappa was the son of Thimmayya Nayak, a powerful noble in charge of a part of the empire with his capital at

Nedangunram, a village about 30 miles to the north of Tiruvannamalai. The father and son seem to have helped Krishna Deva Raya in his campaign against the Muslims at Raichur. Sevvappa is described as 'Dalavoy' or captain of a detachment of the army. Sevvappa or Chinna Sevva, as he is sometimes called, married Murtimamba, a sister of king Achyuta Raya's consort Tirumalamba. Neither Achyuta Raya nor Sevvappa would have known, when they married the two sisters, that the former would become the king of Vijayanagar. Achyuta Raya was a half brother of Krishna Deva Raya and the latter had kept him at Chandragiri virtually under surveillance Krishna Deva Raya was very unhappy during the last few years of his reign due to his own illness and to the death of his only son Tirumala and in 1529 A. D., or thereabout he crowned Achyuta Raya as king. This was the more necessary because about that time, one of the trusted officers of Krishna Deva Raya, Narasinga Nayak, who was in charge of the Chola part of the empire, rebelled and when hard pressed fled and took refuge in Tiruvadi (in Travancore). Achyuta Raya's first act, soon after the death of Krishna Deva Raya, was to put down this rebellion. This was about the end of 1531 or early in 1532 A. D. He seems to have gone south as far as Srirangam and on his way thither he is said to have visited Kanchi and Arunasaila (Tiruvannamai), where he offered worship in the temple. This part of his travel is mentioned in the 'Achyuta Raya Abhyudayam' written by Ranganatha Dindima. It was after he had put down the rebellion that he divided the Madura Nayakship in two, viz., Madura and Tanjore. This he did for administrative convenience. The Tanjore Nayak had jurisdiction over the Chola part of the empire.

Sevvappa, because he was related to Achyuta Raya and was a Dalavoy, was appointed by the King as his betel box

bearer or Adaiappan (Thambul Karandivan), a post only given to a very trusted subordinate. Sevvappa being a powerful, and influential man of the locality, was apponinted the first Nayak of Tanjore by Achyuta Raya. We may assume that Sevvappa was appointed as Nayak in 1532 A. D. In Kuppuswami Sastri's opinion Sevvappa began to repair or construct walls and gopuras to temples only after 1563 A. D. He first constructed, it would seem, the gopura and the dhwajastamba of the temple in Virudunagar, the compound wall and steps to Sri Sailam temple and the tall gopura of Sonadri (Tiruvannamalai) This last item, according to the epigraph found in this temple, was consructed in 1572 A. D. i,e, over half a century later than Krishna Deva Raya's inscription of 1516 A. D. It is probable that by "construction" is meant radical repairs. Krishna Deva Raya's inscription conveys that he did thanksgiving service to Sri Arunachala after his conquests in the north. Moreover he paid seven visits to Tirupati temple between 1513 and 1521 A. D , and it is more than likely that he was in touch with this temple and the buildings which he started must have been completed by then. Furthermore, in the inscription praising Sevvappa for constructing the gopura nothing is mentioned about the thousand pillar mantap which adjoins the tall gopura. This mantap with all its carved pillars must have taken a longer time to build than the gopura and if anything had remained unfinished it must have been the mantap. Since nothing is said about it, the eastern gopura was ready completed It may be that Krishna Deva Raya had ordered these buildings and on their completion came here and then offered his service to Sri Arunachala. The people of Tiruvannamalai say that this tall gopura was completed by Krishna Deva Raya but the gopuras to the South West and North were only built up to the level of the outer enclosure walls. It is said that Ramabhadra Nayak, the so called Amara Nayak of this region,

was in charge of the building construction. He became the Nayak of Gingee in 1520 and died in 1540 A.D. He might have obtained this promotion for the great help he gave to Krishna Deva Raya. The outermost walls of the temple connecting the gopuras have on them statuettes of what appear to be of nobles or Amara Nayaks who helped in the construction of the buildings. Many of them are seen on the south, west and north walls. On the eastern wall the statuettes of two men and two women are seen over the Titti vasal entrance. These probaby represent Ramabhadra Nayak, Krishna Deva Raya and his two queens. It would seem, therefore that Sevvappa only repaired the eleven storeyed gopura and his son installed golden pinnacles on top of it. The writer is inclined to believe that Sevvappa completed the Southern gopura, called the Tirumanjana gopura, through which the Abhisheka water is taken into the temple for bathing the vigraha in the sanctum sanctorum and on this gopura, Achyutappa Nayak installed eleven golden pinnacles. In this gopura there is a panel showing four men and a young boy standing in a posture of supplication. These four men and the boy seem to be Sevvappa, his three sons and grand son. A similar panel showing the same five persons is seen on the side of the steps of a mantap in front of Ganesha's temple and the architecture of the mantap is in Vijayanagar style showing that it may have been built by Sevvappa Nayak. This mantap is now used by the temple authorities as a store room. The shrine over Vidyaeshwara Linga appears to have also been built by Sevvappa Nayak because the pillars of this shrine bear on them the same five figures.

At the time when Sevvappa Nayak was ruling Tanjore, the beginning of the downfall of the empire had started. King Achyuta was weak and in his court there were two powerful parties, divided perhaps over the question of succession. One

party even went so far as to invite the Sultan of Bijapur to Vijayanagar for assistance. The sultan came and remained in the capital for about a week and returned with plenty of costly presents from the opposite party. Achyuta Raya died in 1542 and Sadasiva Raya succeeded him. He was a puppet in the hands of Rama Raya who was *de facto* the king. Rama Raya was the son-in-law of Saluva Thimma the able minister of Krishna Deva Raya. He conspired inside the state and also against the Sultans of Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar. His machinations made the three sultans unite and fight against Vijayanagar. The combined armies of the sultans met the Hindu army at Rakshatangadi near Tallikota in December 1564 A. D., and defeated it. Rama Raya was captured and was immediately beheaded by Hussain Shah of Ahmadnagar. The victorious Muslims then fell upon the capital, Vijayanagar, and for a period of five months killed the people, broke down the temples and palaces with such destructive results that except for a few stone-built temples, the whole town was destroyed and a heap of ruins alone mark the spot where once a famous and a most beautiful city stood. How soon after the defeat of the Hindu army king Sadasiva Raya died is not definitely known, but in 1569 A. D., or thereabout, Tirumala the brother of Rama Raya usurped the throne after carrying plenty of wealth etc., to Penukonda, which he made the capital of the empire. Thus the empire was in a state of confusion and powerful Nayaks like Sevvappa became more or less independent. Advantage of the position of Sevvappa Nayak and of his susceptibility to vanity was taken by clever men like Govinda Suri, who was responsible for the epigraph in praise of Sevvappa. Govinda Suri, who styled himself a "dependent" of Sevvappa "Bhupati", expressed in that inscription his deep gratitude for the favours bestowed on him. It is no wonder that Govinda Suri became the minister

of the Nayak later. The praises which he composed would well succeed in stimulating the vanity of a rich and powerful man like Sevvappa to grant the favours he was desiring! In this way, it seems, that Sevvappa was given the credit for building the eastern gopura which, in fact, he did not; and this plagiarism could not have been brought to the notice of the then king, who with his chiefs, was preoccupied with more important matters of state than this minor affair. It seems clear therefore that the eastern gopura was built and completed by Krishna Deva Raya and not by Sevvappa. He might have, as we have said, carried out some repairs to it in 1572 A.D.

Near the eastern gopura there is the 'Chitra Mantap' over what is called 'Thittivasal' or an entrance corresponding to a sallyport in a fort. This mantap is quite modern though it is built with ancient carved pillars and stones. On a slab over the Thittivasal entrance is a Tamil inscription which is quite modern. In it is recorded that the mantap was built by one Ramamudali of Sengunda Kulam, son of Vetavalam Appaswami and some other people who joined him in building it in Kaliyuga 4980, i.e., 1880 A. D. On enquiry, the writer learnt that the stone pillars and other materials needed for the mantap were brought from a dilapidated Siva shrine on the road to Vetavalam. The pillars seem to be 600 years old and are beautifully carved. On the left, as we enter the mantap, there are three pillars in a row, on each of which we see carved figures of a man and a woman which perhaps represent the donors of the Siva shrine from where they were brought. These two figures are depicted with different dress on each of the three pillars, and on the last pillar, just above the figures of the couple is inscribed in Tamil—"Ramamudali, Jayanayaki Amma's sada sevai". On the face of it, this gives the impression that the figures on the pillar represent Ramamudali and his wife - another very fine example of plagiarism.

Credit should be given, however, to Ramamudali for saving those pillars and other material from people who would otherwise have used them for house-building when they would have been lost for ever.

From the inscriptions published so far, it has been possible to trace the history of the temple from the time of Vijayalaya Chola to that of the Tanjore Nayaks, which covers a period of nearly seven centuries and a half. During the whole of that period there has been no indication of any battle having been fought in or near Tiruvannamalai. The place was famous, as it has always been, only for the sanctity of the Arunachala hill and the Siva temple at its foot. It is said that there was a mud-wa led fort somewhere to the north of the present railway station and this seems likely because the town was the capital of an 'Amara Nayak' during the Vijayanagar period.

In the 18th century this part of the country came into the hands of the Nawabs of the Carnatic, whose capital was at Arcot. These Nawabs, it is said, were quite tolerant towards the Arunachaleshwara temple, and what is more, they recognised the hereditary rights of the chief Gurukal (Archaka) of the temple, presented the chief Gurukal with a palanquin, jewellery and lands. The planquin still exists and the chief Gurukal has the previlege of being carried in it in front of the procession of Sri Arunachala when His image is takan round the sacred hill.

In the latter half of the 18th century—1753 to 1790 A. D.. battles have been fought in and around Tiruvannamalai. When the Vijayanagar Kingdom was in its last throes, with Vellore as its capital, there was civil war between the Nayaks of Tanjore, Madura and Gingee. Among the Muslims, there was war for supremacy in the Carnatic. This disruption and the trade war between the English and the French brought

in their wake invasion by the Maharattas and the Sultans of Mysore. The policy of the Madura Nayaks, particularly of Chokkanatha Nayak, who overthrew and destroyed the Tanjore Nayaks, was the cause of the final break up of the Vijayanagar empire, and what remained of it was annexed by the Muslims. The Nawab of Arcot, a feudatory of the Nizam, was trying to become independent. The Mahrattas got Tanjore as a Jahagir and thus they too played their part in South Indian History. The French and the English made common cause with the Nawabs of Arcot and the Nizam, by supporting the rival candidates in which the Mahrattas also took part. In 1750 A.D., Tiruvannamalai was besieged by Murtuzali Khan and Murari Rao, a Mahratta chieftain. At that time the only fortification in Tiruvannamalai was a low mud wall which was defended by Burkat Ullah Khan, a general of Chanda Sahib, Nawab of Arcot. This he did by dividing his army into two groups to fight in different places round the town. It is said that Burkat Ullah did not want to fight the battle near the temple, a place of sanctity and not of strength. When Burkat Ullah received reinforcements from Arcot, Murtuzali Khan and Murari Rao raised the siege. In 1757 A.D., a French army detachment, under the command of Soupres, approached Tiruvanamalai and the Muslim garrison abandoned the town so that there was no fighting there. In August 1758 A.D , the town was captured by the Mahratta Killadar of Thiagadurga, a fort 30 miles south of Tiruvannamalai, but in September the same year, a strong French detachment, under the command of Soubinet attacked Tiruvannamalai and after three assaults captured it and killed the garrison. Where exactly these engagements took place is not known. In 1760 A.D., Capt: Stephens captured Tiruvannamalai from the French and occupied it.

About this time Haiper Ali became master of Mysore (1751 A.D.) and in 1765 A.D., he came under the influence of the Mahrattas to whom he paid money and ceded some territory beyond the Mysore frontier, as the price of peace. In 1766 A.D., the rise of Haider Ali was found to be a source of danger and the English, the Nizam and the Mahrattas formed a coalition against him, but Haider Ali bought off the Mahrattas and the Nizam from that alliance. On the 25th August 1766 A.D., the combined forces of Haider and the Nizam, on their march to Arcot, encountered a small detachment of the English army in the pass near Chengam, twenty miles from Tiruvannamalai and defeated it. At Chengam itself, on the 3rd September 1766, Haider encountered a strong English force under the command of Col: Smith, gave battle but was defeated. Col: Smith was obliged to fall back upon Tiruvannamalai, owing to the commissariat having been entrusted to the Nawab of Arcot who disappointed him. After various manoueres near Tiruvannamalai, Col: Smith gave battle and defeated the troops of Haider and the Nizam. This was on the 25th September 1766 A.D. The battle lasted for two days it is said. The exact place of the battle is not known, but the people in Tiruvannamalai say that it was fought at a place about two miles on the road to Chengam, south-west of the town. Haider Ali, in 1782 A.D., captured Cuddalore from the English and his son Tippu Sultan defeated and captured the English under Col: Braithewaite. At this juncture Haider Ali died and Tippu Sultan had to fight alone with the English with varying success. Then came the treaty of Mangalore in 1784 when Tippu Sultan and the English agreed to mutual restoration of conquests and exchange of prisoners. But war broke out again between them and in 1790 Tippu Sultan attacked Thiagadurga fort which was defended by Capt: Flint. The whole population

of the surrounding country took refuge in the fort. At that time the inhabitants of Tiruvannamalai, activated by the news from Thiagadurga and apprehending an attack, collected arms and men to defend themselves till the English army should arrive. Tippu Sultan attacked Tiruvannamalai and the batteries, which the people of the town had placed at the ends of cross roads, were soon compelled to surrender unconditionally. It is said that Tippu Sultan occupied the hillock Pavala-kunru after destroying the small shrine which was there. Tippu Sultan's soldiers, it would appear, were cruel to the people of the town but strange to say, the temple of Sri Arunachala was left alone, excepting for one single mortar shot fired at it. The missile seems to have hit a part of northern wall causing little or no damage. After camping there for some weeks, Tippu Sultan (and his army) left Tiruvannamalai for Perumakal and sent an emissary to Pondicherry from there. That was the last battle fought in Tiruvannamalai and from 1791 A.D., till the present day peace has prevailed as of old. It seems that a gun belonging to Tippu Sultan was found buried near the hillock where he had camped; it was dug out and taken to the Madras Museum about forty years ago. The shrine on Pavala-kunru was rebuilt by the people of the town about sixty years back. In Sri Arunachala temple, to the right of the Ballala gopura, there has recently been built a hall and library and in the garden of which is found a large number of granite balls. It is said that they were collected for the use of the artillery to attack Tippu Sultan!

In spite of the vicissitudes Tiruvannamalai had to pass through in the 2nd half of the 18th century, the sanctity of the hill and of the temple remained untouched and it is said that the spiritual aspirants who were there and who carried on their search for "Truth" remained unperturbed. It is small

wonder that these men remained calm since they had no desire for the material side of things, power, greed, bloodshed and conquest of land.

Great is the glory of those townsmen who, though not regular soldiers, died fighting in the streets of Tiruvannamalai against Tippu Sultan and his army, to protect their town, its deity and its inhabitants, but greater is the glory of Sri Arunachaleshwara who gives power to conquer Death itself!

Chapter IV

THE ORIGIN AND DISCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE.

There seems to be no doubt that the Dravidians had attained to a high degree of civilisation and this civilisation dominated the whole of India before the advent of the Aryans. It is held by some that the Dravidians were the founders of the Sind-Punjab civilisation recently discovered at Harappa and Mohenjadaro. From a study of the antiquities illustrative of religion, it appears that the religion of the people was the worship of the Lingam. At Harappa, it is said, that a black stone resembling a Lingam has been found. Harappa civilisation is said to be nearly 5000 years old. Saivism, therefore, appears to be the most ancient living faith in the world, further more, the worship of the Lingam seems to have originated in South India in association with the Arunachala hill, the first representation of the Lingam according to certain Puranas. Puranas are popular sectarian compilations of mythology, philosophy, history and sacred law intended for instruction of the laity. Some Europeans and some Indians with western education question the authority of the Puranic lore, because

there is some disagreement in the Puranas themselves as they stand. In spite of all that, there seems to be no doubt that much genuine and valuable historical tradition can be found in them.

Sivamaha Purana in Vidyeshwara Samhita contains Arunachala Mahatmya. In its fourth chapter are found dialogues between rishis and Sootha Muni and between Sanathkumara and Nandikeshwara about the Lingam, its significance and its origin. The rishis, while learning all about shravana, kirtana and manana as means to obtain Mukti, asked Sootha Muni thus:—" All Devas, at times, are worshipped in the form of images, but how is it that Siva alone is worshipped both as a Lingam and in the form of an image?". Sootha Muni replied:— " O Munis, Your question can only be answered by Siva himself and none else, since your question probes into the very heart of the sacred secrets. I shall, however, narrate to you what has been told me by Siva himself and what has been handed down through generations of gurus by word of mouth. Siva alone is Brahma-swarupa. Therefore He is Aroopa-nishkala or without form and indivisible; Nirguna or without attributes. He is also Sakala or divisible or Saguna, *i e.*, with attributes, therefore He is of Form As Nishkala He is represented as Lingam and in His Sakala quality He is worshipped as Vigraha or Image, which has form. Thus with His Nishkala and Sakala qualities, He is discribed as 'Parama' and 'Brahman'. Therefore people worship Him, at all times, both as the Lingam and as a Vigraha with form. Other Devas have no Brahmatvam, nor have they Nishkalatvam. They posses only Sakala quality, hence they are worshipped in the form of Vigrahas. Siva alone is Brahman, others are Jivas; Siva alone is the meaning of ' Pranava' which is the essence of Vedanta."

Long ago on Mandragiri, Sanatkumara, son of Brahma, asked the sage Nandikeshwara thus:—" O Sage, we have seen and heard about all Devas, except Siva, being worshipped always and every where, only in the form of Vigrahas. Siva alone we see being worshipped both as a Lingam and as a Vigraha. Why is it so?".

Nandikeshwara replied:—" Your question seeks to obtain the secrets of Brahma's nature. You being a devotee I shall tell you what was narrated by Siva Himself. Siva has Brahmatvam. The nature of Siva and the Brahman is the same, or, Siva and the Brahman are the same 'VASTU'. Therefore Siva is Nishkala and on that account, to represent that aspect, His worship as a Lingam is ordained in the Vedas. By virtue of His being Sakala, He is likewise worshipped in the form of Vigrahas. The other Devas are Jivas, hence they are worshipped in the form of Vigrahas only".

Sanatkumara asked:—" O Sire, the great among the yogis, I am eager to hear about the origin of the Lingam".

Nandikeshwara replied:—" Child listen. Long ago there was a world war between Brahma and Visnu. In order to quell their pride Siva, (Parameshwara) manifested Himself as a 'Nishkala Stambam' or 'Attributeless Pillar' on the field of battle Nishkala Siva, for the good of the world, thus showed His Linga-roopa as His mark of recognition. From that time on, the Lingam became the Nishkala symbol." The story connected with this has already been given in Chapter II above.

Nandikeshwara cites the Vedas as his authority. The Vedas which are composed of Samhitas, are not the work of one individual, but the work of generations of thinkers among the Aryans, who added new thoughts to them at different periods

of antiquity, before as well as after they came to India. They must therefore have included the thought of the Dravidian Civilisation when they came in contact with it. Tradition has it that the 'Formless' and the 'Indivisible' state of Śiva or the Brahman, represented by the Lingam, was first associated with the Arunachala hill and simultaneously with the stone Lingam at the foot of it. Thus the stone Lingam in the temple of Tiruvannamalai must have come into existence long ago and the first record of this Lingam, available in literature, is by Nakkirar of the third Tamil Sangam and a conservative estimate of its antiquity will be over 2000 years. It is likely that the Lingam existed even earlier than this Over this Lingam, a shrine must have existed, however humble it may have been. Later the edifice came to be built in stone and with the successive additions by different kings this splendid temple now occupies an area of nearly 25 acres of land. It is one among the biggest temples in South India and possibly in the whole of India. The outer walls are like these of a fort. They measure about 700 feet North to South and about 1500 feet East to West.

It is not definitely known who built the first stone edifice over this ancient Lingam. It must have been built by the Pallavas in the 7th century, or by the Cholas in the 9th century A. D. Both were builders of temples. It is probable that the Cholas continued what the Pallavas began in constructing the temple. No Pallava inscriptions have been met with, so far, in this temple but there is no reason, on that account, to deny them the honour of having built the first stone edifice on a small scale. Even assuming that the Cholas built it, the edifice must have come into being during Vijayalaya Chola's period, eleven centuries ago. If we take into consideration the existence of a building constructed with bricks and wood, as the central shrine, before Vijayalaya replaced it with a stone

edifice, then the age of the central shrine goes back by several centuries. Hence there seems to be little doubt that the origin of this shrine is very ancient.

The building is of the Dravidian Art in stone, which is indigenous. This art seems to have originated with the Pallavas in the 6th century A. D., being a regular transition from wood to stone. The Dravidian style of Architecture of temples is characterised by a pyramidal tower or gopura over the central shrine with large gopuras over the entrance gateways. The large and closely jointed blocks of stones of the edifices, with no mortar intervening, is another feature. Sri Arunachala temple is a notable specimen of Chola art and architecture further beautified by the Hoysala art and sculpture. A ground plan of the temple is appended for the information of the reader. We shall now take him to see the various parts of the temple.

The main entrance to the temple is to the east through the eleven storied gopura built by Krishna Deva Raya in 1516 A. D. It is the tallest of the gopuras and is about 217 feet in height; its base measures 135X98 feet. On the northern wall of the entrance there are two figures. The upper one seems to represent king Krishna Deva Raya. It is not well carved, yet it resembles somewhat the bronze statue of king Krishna Deva Raya seen in the Tirupati Temple.

To the north of this gopura there is another entrance called Thittivasal, about which mention has been made in the previous chapter. The doorway in the wall must have been made while building the outermost enclosure about the year 1515 A. D. It may have been used as a private entrance for the use of Royalty, their Viceroys or their women-folk, the gopura being the entrance used for the public and for the images in the temple to pass through during festivals. At

present the Thittivasal alone is used for the ingress and egress of the images. The reason for this, on enquiry, was found to be that the images are taken to represent 'Sookshma Sarira' or the 'subtle body' and as such they should not be taken through the eastern gopura which represents the 'Sthoola Sarira' or 'Gross Body'. The images, however pass through two other big gopuras before they come to the big eastern gopura and the Gurukals say that the other two gopuras are not counted as Sthoola Sariras! The explanation given does not satisfy the enquiring mind and it seems probable that the explanation was got up to give authority to take the images through the Thittivasal entrance to satisfy the local dictum. The very object of building this fine gopura at such expense by king Krishna Deva Raya has thus been frustrated, which certainly is a great injustice done to that famous Hindu king of Vijayanagar. It is said that the images do pass through this gopura when they are taken to the village Pallikonda Pattu, for what is called by some, the Thirthavari festival and by others the obsequies of Vira Ballala, the Hoysala king. The custom of reading the news of the death of king Ballala in front of the images before they proceed to Pallikonda Pattu on a certain date is still observed. On this day there is no taboo for the images to pass through the eastern gopura, though it still remains a Sthoola Sarira!

The outer walls surrounding the temple are massive and high; they are built in stone to a certain height and the upper parts in brick and mortar with Nandis on top. The top of the eastern wall is crenellated and has holes in it. In addition to the eastern gopura, there is one to the South called Tirumanjana gopura, one to the West called the Pey gopura, and one to the North called Ammani Amman gopura. It is not known who built the Pey gopura and it is now in a damaged condition. On the outer walls are statuettes inserted

fairly high and these perhaps represent the chieftains who took part in building these walls and other structures for Krishna Deva Raya. It is not possible now to make out who those were. Among these there is one in the west-wall having two figures in one panel. On the eastern wall, there are only four statuettes over the Thittivasal entrance, and a reference to these has been made in the previous chapter.

On entering through the eastern gopura into the first quadrangle, we see on our right, the thousand pillared mantap built by king Krishna Deva Raya. The Pillar on the right, as we enter the mantap, has on its top what appears to be the figure of Krishna Deva Raya, in supplication posture and on the pillar opposite is carved his Ishtadevata. It is a beautiful mantap or hall, the pillars of which are well carved and arranged. In about the middle of it there is a raised platform, some two feet high. In the southwest corner of this hall there is the Pathala Lingam in a small under ground shrine. This mantap and the shrine were the places where Bhagavan Sri Ramana spent his time in meditation soon after he came to Tiruvannamalai. There are other places in this temple where this famous Sage sat and meditated.

The thousand pillared mantap, if kept clean and in good repair, would make a very fine place for holding public meetings or gatherings. Apropos, it may be pointed out here that, for the last fifty years or so, this fine mantap is used to house the temple elephant! This again is another act of injustice done to king Krishna Deva Raya who built this mantap, at great cost and labour, for the benefit of the local public.

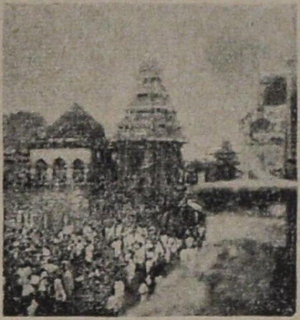
The continuation of this mantap towards the Gopura Subramanya Shrine, was also built by the same king and is now used for keeping some Vahanas. This is another place

which was occupied by Bhgavan Sri Ramana for his meditation as also the shrine of Gopura Subramanya. In front of the thousand pillared mantap there is another, a smaller one built by Vena Odeyan and its north-eastern pillar is enclosed to form the object of worship in the shrine built around it. This shrine is called Kambat-ilayanar. It was built by Proudha Deva Raya or Deva Raya II of Vijayanagar, when he was viceroy here. Arunagirinatha, the saint, was responsible for this construction. The shrine was probably built in 1421 A.D., to commemorate the vision, king Deva Raya had, of Subramanya emerging out of the carving on the pillar. This vision he obtained when Arunagirinatha sang in praise of Subramanya in front of that pillar. To the south of this shrine is a tank, repaired and renamed in 1902 A. D., as Sivaganga Tank, by the Natukottai Chettiars. On the walls surrounding this tank are seen two most incongruous figures in the shape of helmetted soldiers in uniform having dogs at their feet! This tank was originally dug out by Krishna Deva Raya in 1516 A. D., and was intended for Theppotsavam. He named it 'Vasanta Kolam' and to get water to it, it is said in his epigraph, that he dug Tirumalai Devi Amman Samudram and connected it with the former with an underground conduit.

On the south-west of this tank are some Illupu trees and the Thirthavari Mantap is near it. Bhagavan Sri Ramana spent some time in meditation under these trees and near a small shrine for Ganesha in the garden south of these trees.

Behind the Kambat ilayanar there is a Ganesha shrine quite modern in architecture. It is said that on that spot stood a big peepal tree and this was cut down to make room for the shrine. Farther up and in front of the second gopura called the Ballala gopura, is a fine monolithic Nandi in a mantap, This must have been installed by Deva Raya II, and

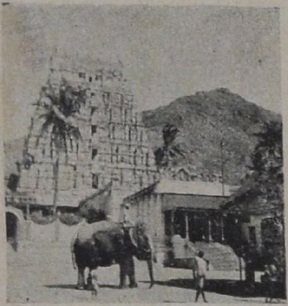
The palanquin presented to the chief Gurukal by the Nawab of Arcot.



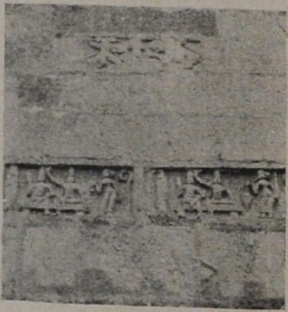
The car of the temple.

Panel showing Deva Raya II and his queen Gowri at the entrance to Kambathilayanar.

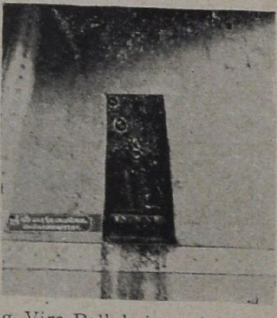
Statuette of Deva Raya II on the pillar of the mantap over the first Nandi in the first quadrangle.



Ballala Gopura.



The emblems of Chola, Pandya and the Hoysalas on the second enclosure walls.



The statuette of king Vira Ballala in a niche in the Ballala Gopura.

on the Pillars of the mantap are seen the statuettes of that king and his queen. This Nandi has round it a frame work of iron on which are arranged lamps which when lighted form the outline of a Lingam. This iron structure mars the beauty of the stone structure.

In front of the Nandi there is a flight of steps leading to the Ballala gopura containing five storeys When we face the gopura, on the right is the Gopura Subramanya shrine and on the left is the shrine for Sundereshwara Lingam. Both these shrines must have been extended by Deva Raya II about the year 1421 A. D. The Vijayanagar insignia, the 'Boar and Dagger' is seen on one of the extensions at its junction with the gopura. His statuette is seen on the south wall of the shrine, and also in many places, on the basement of the Sundereshwara shrine. In the Subramanya shrine there is a statue of saint Arunagirinatha and this was installed quite recently. In the passage of Ballala gopura, on the south wall high up in a niche, is placed a small statue of king Ballala. It is about 2½ feet high and from it one has the impression that he was old but vigorous. He wore a beard and whiskers. From this gopura extend the second enclosure walls to form the second quadrangle. The gopura and the enclosure walls appear to have been built and completed by king Ballala just before he came to reside in this town for three years from 1328 to 1331 A. D. There is a local story which says that when the gopura was completed and when king Ballala came to see it, he was informed of the cost of construction. When he heard about it he seems to have exclaimed, "What! Did it cost so much as that?". This little story shows that king Ballala was alive when the gopura and the enclosure walls were completed. In the walls there are three 'Katte' gopuras, each of which is placed opposite to the bigger one found in the

outer enclosure walls. On the southern wall of the second enclosure are seen panels in which are found the figures of a fish, two men seated on a bench, one of whom is touching the crown the other wears, and in some an additional figure of a dasi with a whisk or chamara in her hand. These panels show that the walls and the katte gopuras bearing those were built by a Pandya Feudatory whose crown was restored by king Ballala or his representative after defeating him. The other insignias seen on these walls are—'Ganda-bherunda', the Hoysala insignia; Tiger, the Chola insignia, etc., On the cornice of the Ballala gopura the Hoysala and the Chola insignias are seen. It is evident from this that the gopuras and the enclosure walls were built by Chola, Pandya and the western Chalukya feudatories along with the Hoysalas.

On entering the second quadrangle, one sees a tank on the left, now called Brahmathirtha and a Bhairava shrine next to the gopura. This tank was originally dug by Vena Odeyan, son of Perunjinga, about the year 1230 A. D. It was then called Perumal Thatakam and around it he had opened a large flower garden. To the north of this he built Perumal Mantap now called 'Poravi'. To the south-east of that garden he built another mantap now called 'Thithavari Mantap'. - (The second enclosure walls came to be built a century after the construction of the tank and the Thirthavari Mantap, and this mantap is now outside the second enclosure.) In the mantap, which forms a part of Poravi, there are two pillars with a statuette on each, facing North. These statuettes represent perhaps Vena Odeyan and his father Perunjinga. They are in full dress with long caps, but unfortunately the figures are damaged. On the ceiling of this mantap some fresco paintings, depicting stories from Ramayana, are seen. The pillars inside the 'Poravi' hall have very fine carvings on them, and those on the platform contain statuettes of Vena Odeyan, his father

and his two brothers. The Perumal Mantap must have been used for the Utsava Moortis of Venugopal and His Devis during certain festivals. Opposite the Poravi, and by the side of the tank is another small mantap This perhaps is the 'Mani Mantap' built by Thandava Venan (Thandavan) in 1572 A D. (Epi : 420 of 28). To the West of Brahmathirtha, there are four shrines, one for Siva who fought an elephant, one for Ganesha, one for Vidyaeshwara Linga, and another contains Brahma Linga, a Linga on which are carved four beautiful human faces, each facing a cardinal point. These four faces represent Fire, Air, Earth and Water. The Linga is "Pancha Mukhi", or five faced, the fifth face is Akasha or Ether and this is represented by the top or dome of the Linga. Proceeding from here to the extreme west of the prakara or quadrangle we see the Amavasya Mantap, a small shrine for Paduka or foot-prints, a shrine for Karthikeya and a mantap for Him. Who built these is not known. They look rather modern and constructed with material from mantaps that had fallen. We now turn to the East and proceed towards the third eastern gopura called 'Killi gopura'. In front of this gopura there is the second Nandi. This was installed by king Ballala. Both his figure and the Ganda-bherunda sign are found on this structure. The Killi gopura with its six storeys, is beautiful with its stucco-work. Here also is a flight of steps leading into the gopura. On the right are the shrines for Bhairava and Subramanya. On reaching the entrance, on the left, is a panel containing two figures, and these seem to represent Bhaskaramantri and his wife. An inscription records that he built the gopura. This gopura forms the third entrance and the enclosure walls, departing from it, form the boundaries of the third quadrangle. There are no additional gopuras in these walls, but in the western wall there is an opening into this quadrangle. The Killi gopura seems to have been built in the

11th century A. D. When the court-yard is reached the first thing seen is a mantap. This was built by Mangayakkarasi and her brother in 1202 A. D. (Epi: 151). During the karthikai festival the image of Sri Arunachala and those of other Deities are placed in this mantap to witness the lighting of the fire on the top of the hill. On the right of the mantap and the gopura, are four shrines, one each to Ekambereshwar, Jambukeshwar, Chidambereshwar and Pidari. The architecture of the Chidambareshwar shrine appears older than that of the others and it must have been built in the 9th century, whereas, the other three must have been built in the 10th century A. D. On the back of the Ekambereshwara shrine there is a beautiful representation of Lingodbhava or Adimudi. In front of the Pidari shrine, which faces North, there is a stone trident and two Bali peethas or sacrificial altars. Inside the Pidari shrine are found Ganesha, Sapta Kanyas or seven 'Matris' and a severed head of a G ddess with a crown. This severed head represents 'Renuka', the Goddess worshipped at Padaiveedu, a town about 30 miles from Tiruvannamalai. Renkua represents the 'Formidable' or the 'Fearful' aspect of Kali, the consort of Siva. To the west of the Pidari is the 'Kolu-mantap', built by Vena Odeyan in 1230 A. D. This building is now used as the Devasthanam Office. To the left of the Killi-gopuara, is a Mantap which must have been built by Sevvappa Nayak and next to it is the kitchen. The former is used as store room at present. This building has been referred to in the previous chapter.

In front of the kitchen and some distance away from it, is the Sthala Vriksha, or the temple tree, of the species 'Mimosops elengi' (Magadam Pu in Tamil). There are three such trees, and one of these may be about a couple of centuries old. Between these trees and the wall of the fourth enclosure

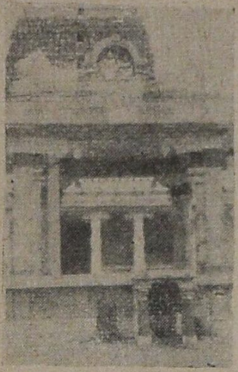
there are about four stones in the pavement with inscriptions on them. One among them bears on it the insignia of the Vijayanagar kingdom, viz, the Boar and Dagger. These stones might have found their way here during the extensive repairs which the munificent Natukottai Chettiyars made to this temple. One of these *epigraphs* has been read and published and it refers to the 13th regnal year of Aditya Chola I, (893 A. D.)

On the wall opposite, about 10 feet from the ground, there is a panel containing the statuette of a Thambiran; other panels in a line depict the occasion of the Thambiran reviving the dead horse of the then Chola king, which evidently died of snake bite. The snake is also shown in the panel. The figures are self explanatory. Below these there is another statuette, in a niche, and it may be the representation of the disciple of the Thambiran.

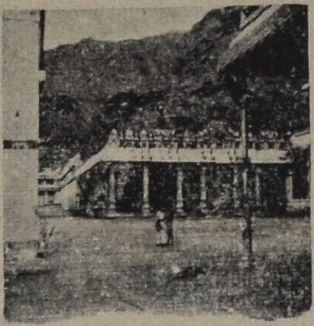
The Thambirans were managing the temple properties in those days. The tomb of the first Thambiran, Devasigamony, is found near Kinnathur, two miles east of the temple and is called 'Gurumurtam'. In the early days of his sojourn in the town, Bhagavan Sri Ramana spent some time in this building and also in a garden nearby. When he was in that garden his uncle came and recognised him as his nephew Venkataraman. More about this can be found in the book on his life and teachings.

The Thambirans had their original Mutts in this town and the one that is represented on the wall referred to, was a contemporary of king Manuneethi Chola at Thiruvarur. It would appear therefore, that this king was Uttama Chola, as his name suggests. He ruled from 969 to 985 A. D.

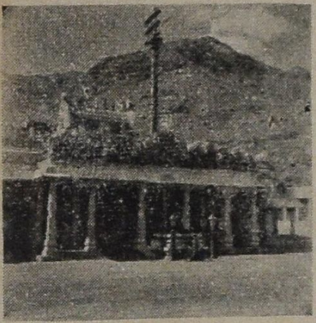
On the southern and the western side of the quadrangle, there are verandahs and balconies on top of them evidently



Arunagiri Yogi's seat.

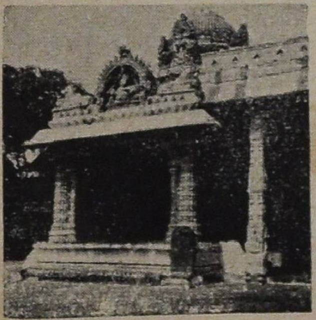


Devi's shrine and its mantap



Siva's shrine. front view. The Arunachala hill is seen in the background. Dhwaja stamba and Vena Odeyan's gopura is also seen.

Representation of Uttama Chola and his queen on the wall; (near the second door of the eastern entrance into the Siva's shrine.)



Ganesa's shrine on the right of Siva's shrine. The four pillars on its left show on them statuettes of Perunjinga and his three sons.

the old stone materials of this shrine, after replacement, were sold and people purchased them for building houses and other constructions. On that account we have lost much of the history of these shrines in particular and of the country in general. The only reference about the Devi's temple, among the inscriptions published so far, is Epi: No. 161, which relates to the second regnal year of Kulottunga III, recording gifts to Devi Unnamolai Nachiar. The gifts were made in 1179 A D The Devi's shrine is said to have been built by Kulottunga I, who was a staunch Saiva king. In the mantap in front of the Devi's shrine is the 'Nava Graha' mantap, which is held in great veneration by the people and they light lamps to it and go round the mantap to propitiate the evil influence of planets. To the east of the Devi's shrine and facing it are the 'Yaga Sala' and a shrine for Kalatheshwar. In this quadrangle therefore, we find five shrines to represent the five elements viz, Chidambereshwar, for Akash or Ether; Kalatheshwar, for Vayu or Air; Jambukeshwar, Water; Ekambereshwar, Earth and Arunachaleshwar, Fire.

We now face the front of the main shrine of Siva. In front of it there is a bali-peetah, a Dhwaja stamba and a Nandi. The Dhwaja stamba was erected by Krishna Deva Raya, but it is now difficult to say whether it has been replaced since or not. It does not tally with the description given in Krishna Deva Raya's inscription. To our left is a beautiful edifice for Ganesha. This Ganesh is quite large and the shrine over him must have been built or remodelled in the 13th century. To our right is another shrine and it is for Subramanya. This must also have been built about the same time. The Ganesh Shrine seems to be the more popular of the two.

The central shrine is enclosed by the fourth enclosure, a high wall right round. It has on it many inscriptions. If we examine this wall from the outside, we find that the eastern third is an extension built later than the western twothirds. The western twothirds may have been built in the later half of the 9th century by Aditya I or early in the 10th century by Parantaka I. The eastern extension was perhaps built by Uttama Chola. The second door through which we have to pass to the interior, is referred to as the Uttama Chola door, and the first door and the gopura on top of it, is referred to as Vena Odeyan's door and gopura. (Vide inscription of Krishna Deva Raya.) On the left of the second door, there is a panel containing figures to represent king Uttama Chola and his Queen. On the door frame, is a figure of the Thambiran, the contemporary of Uttama Chola. This and the second door must have been built in the second half of the 10th century A. D. The first door through which we have to pass, and the small gopura on top of it, must have been added by Vena Odeyan in 1230 A. D.

On entering the quadrangle, which is covered by stone roofing, we see before us a bali peetah and a Nandi. This is the fourth Nandi and is smaller than the others we have already seen. In front of it, on a raised platform, are the Mahamantap and the central shrine. The platform is wide enough around the shrine for circumambulation. Along the walls of the enclosure there is a raised verandah all round. The roof is supported by colonades of stone pillars in two rows. The pathway between these two raised portions is also for circumambulating the central shrine. On the south verandah there are 63 stone images of Saiva saints, Lingas and Ganesh. On the west is a shrine for the Utsava Moorthies of Siva and his consort. Next to this is one for Venugopal and His two Devis. This shrine is immediately behind the central

shrine. There is a legend attached to these idols. It seems they were originally in a small Vaisnava Village or Agraharam near the large tank 'samudram' about two miles to the south of Sri Arunachala temple. It is said that the people of the village, during certain festivals, carried the Utsava Moorthies from there to Tirukoilur, about 20 miles away. Tirukoilur is a Vaisnava centre with a large Visnu temple, having a big gopura on each of its three sides, with no enclosure walls. The Vaisnava inhabitants of that village, near the Samudram, were bigoted people and every time the Saiva idols from Sri Arunachala temple passed by to go round the hill the Vaisnava villagers attacked the procession and thus hindered its progress. Repeated complaints of the behavior of the Vaisnavas were made to the Chola king of that period. The king himself, it is said, came to verify the complaint and when he was satisfied, he played a trick on the people of that village. During a certain festival the king ordered that all the people of the village should go in procession to Tirukoilur. When they had gone, he had the images of Venugopal and his Devis removed from the temple in that village and he had them installed immediately, at the back of Sri Arunachala shrine. When this news reached Tirukoilur, the utsava-moorthies were kept in the temple there and the agraharam near the Samudram was abandoned by its inhabitants. This work must have been done by a powerful king and it is likely that it took place during the reign of Kulottunga I.

Next to the Venugopal shrine, in the north-west corner, there is the Karthikeya shrine. On the northern verandah are found Utsava-Moorthies of the Saiva saints, and a shrine for Bhairava who is an aspect of Siva. Adjacent to this is the retiring room for Sri Arunachala and every night the ceremony of taking Him to that room for rest is observed. Then comes a doorway which opens in the third quadrangle and to the Devi's

shrine. Next to the doorway is the shrine for Nataraja and this beautiful image is of brass. It is said that below the site, where Nataraja is installed, there was an underground cellar from which some valuable articles were recovered and handed over to the temple authorities. There is a similar story of a cellar in the Killi-gopura from which some jewellery was recovered and given to the temple. Perhaps these are only stories!

Now we come again to the front of the central shrine and over the steps, we reach the platform referred to already. This platform forms the fifth round around the central shrine. The central shrine itself consists of a large and a small room. The large room, which is the eastern portion, is called the 'Mahamantap.' It has two doors, one on the east, the other in the west. The western door opens into a passage running from north to south, which separates this room from the Sanctum sanctorum. The Sanctorum sanctum or 'Garbhagriha' has only one door to the east, opposite to the door of the Mahamantap. These two structures must be over 1100 years old. On the base of the garbhagriha are found epigraphs of Vijayalaya and Parantaka I; but the base of the Mahamantap is completely hidden by the platform which must have been built quite recently by the Chettiars. The thick lime-wash in many places here has obliterated the inscriptions, and it is doubtful if these will become available for study. On entering the Mahamantap from the eastern door, a small Nandi called the 'Pradosha Nandi' is seen. This is the fifth and the smallest of the lot. In this hall there are some inscriptions on the walls which await study and publication. When we get into the passage, between this hall and the Garbhagriha, and and turn round to examine the western wall of the Mahamantap, we see on the left wall the figure of a man with a beard, and on

the right wall another figure clean shaven. There are inscriptions near these figures in a fairly good state of preservation.

On the south wall of the Garbhagriha are seen the statuettes of Ganesa and Daksinamurti. On the west wall is the representation of Lingodbhava. On the north wall, Parvati and Trimurtis are represented. On entering the Garbha-griha we find it has two divisions, the eastern portion is for accommodating people who go there to perform Pooja through the agency of Gurukals while the western half contains the Lingam representing 'AROOPA NISHKALA ARUNACHALA'. This ancient Lingam has been worshipped by devotees for over 2000 years. About two hundred devotees, on an average worship the Lingam on ordinary days, but during festivals the number of the devotees is more than six times the daily average. On this Lingam is poured, at all times, the unceasing and unchanging stream of fervent piety of devotees.

The Lingam is silent! Even the dumb walls have, in their own way, given the time of their origin etc., but the Lingam is supremely silent! Its SILENT EXISTENCE is in itself an indication that we too, should still our minds. The mind reacts constantly to the impact of sensations, thoughts and ideas. The cessation of this continuous reaction is the real silence and in the depth of this Silence alone can be realised the Formless, the Indivisible and the Original Existence! The silent Lingam itself is a symbol of the egoless state.

The Lingam in the Garbha-griha, or the heart of the temple, has been there and remains there unattached and apart from all deities in the several prakaras; even thus, the "I" in us abides in our heart unattached and apart from the 'Panchakoshas' of our bodies and that changless "I" is the Brahman. We walked into the temple with *one* idea to see the Lingam, in

spite of the numerous distractions which we must encounter before reaching 'IT' in the Garbha-griha; similarly we should dive deep into ourselves with *one* thought to find Him or the 'I' in our Heart That one-pointed thought stills the mind and is equal to that Silence, which though indiscribable is yet described as 'Sat, Chit and Ananda', and verily thou art That!

After entering the temple and going round, we came face to face with the Lingam only when we crossed the threshold of the Garbha-griha; even so, we attain the REAL only when we cross the phenominal world!

Appendix I.

LIST OF CHOLA KINGS

1.	Vijayalaya	... 846—880 A. D.
2.	Aditya I.	... 880—907
3.	Parantaka I.	... 907—947
4.	Rajaditya	... 947—949
5.	Gandaraditya and	
6.	Arinjaya	... 949—950
7.	Parantaka II.	... 950—966
8.	Aditya II.	... 965—970
9.	Uttama Chola	... 969—985
10.	Rajaraja I.	... 985—1011
11.	Rajendra Chola I.	... 1011—1043
12.	Rajadhiraja I.	... 1012—1052
13.	Rajendradeva	... 1052—1062
14.	Rajamahendra	} ... 1062—1074
15.	Virarajendra	
16.	Adhirajendra	

17.	Rajendra Chola II or, Kulottunga I.	...	1074—1118
18.	Vikrama Chola	...	1118—1135
19.	Kulottunga II	...	1135—1145
20.	Rajaraja II	...	1145—1172
21.	Rajadhiraja II or Ediriliperumal	...	1172—1178
22.	Kulottunga Chola III or, Virarajendra.	...	1178—1216
23.	Rajaraja III	...	1216—1251
24.	Rajendra Choḷa III	...	1251—1260

Appendix II

LIST OF VIJAYANAGAR KINGS

1.	Harihara I.	...	1336—1355 A. D.
2.	Bukka I.	...	1355—1377
3.	Harahara II.	...	1377—1404
4.	Bukka II.	...	1404—1406
5.	Deva Raya I.	...	1406—1422
6.	Vijaya Bhupati Raya	...	1422
7.	Deva Raya II.	...	1422—1449
8.	Mallikarjuna Raya	...	1449—1465
9.	Virupaksha	...	1465—1485
10.	Saluva Narasimha	...	1485—1492
11.	Immadi Narasimha	...	1492—1505
12.	Vira Narasimha	...	1505—1509
13.	Krishna Deva Raya	...	1509—1530
14.	Achyuta Raya	...	1530—1542 (Coronation in 1539 A. D.
15.	Sadasiva Raya	...	1541—1570
16.	Tirumala Raya	...	1570—1574
17	Sri Ranga Raya	...	1574—1586

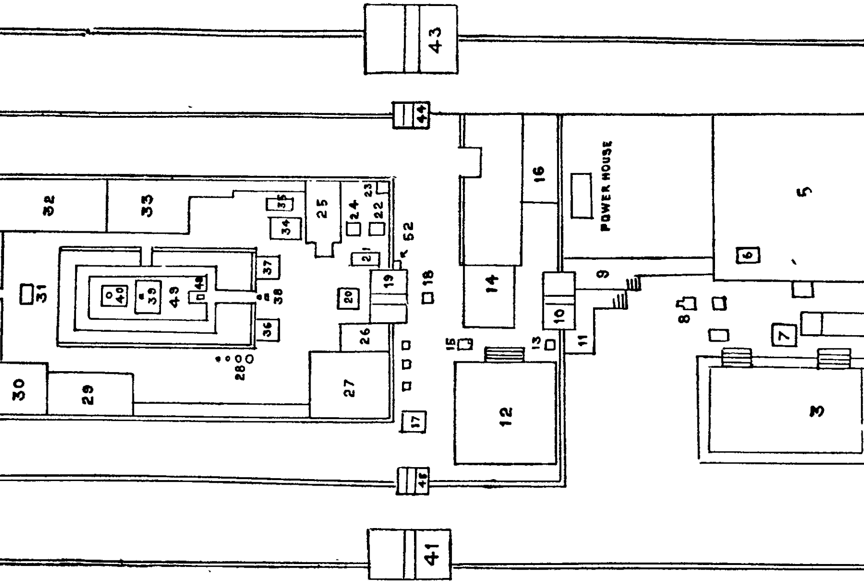
18.	Venkatapathi, or Venkata I	...	1586—1614
19.	Rama Raya	...	1616—1632
20.	Venkata Raya II	...	1632—1642

Appendix III

KEY TO THE PLAN OF THE TEMPLE

1. Eastern gopura.
2. Chitramantap and the Tittivasal.
3. Vasanta kolum or the Sivaganga tank.
4. Kambath-ilayanar.
5. Thousand-pillar mantap.
6. Pathala Linga.
7. Ganesha shrine.
8. First Nandi—Installed by Deva Raya II.
9. Gopura Subramanya shrine.
10. Ballala gopura.
11. Sundereshwara shrine.
12. Perumal thatakam or Brahma thirtha.
13. Bhairava shrine.
14. Perumal mantap or Poravi.
15. Mani Mantap.
16. Library.
17. Brahma Linga.
18. Second Nandi—Installed by Vira Ballala III.
19. Killi-gopura.
20. Mantap built by Mangayakkarasi.
21. Ekambareshwara shrine.
22. Jambukeshwara shrine.
23. Chidambereshwara shrine.
24. Pidari.

RUNACHALESHWAR TEMPLE



25. Devastanam Office.
26. Devastanam store.
27. Pakasalai.
28. Sthala Vriksha or Temple tree.
29. Kalyana mantap.
30. Makarasankranti mantap.
31. Seat dedicated to Arunagiri Yogi.
32. Amman Kovil.
33. Mantap in front of Amman Kovil.
34. Yaga salai.
35. Kalatheshwara shrine.
36. Ganesha shrine.
37. Subramanya shrine.
38. Dhwajastamba and the third Nandi.
39. Mahamantap, with the fifth nandi called the 'Pradosha Nandi'
40. Girbha-griha.
41. Tirumanjana gopura. (South).
42. Pey gopura (West).
43. Ammani Amman gopura. (North)
44, 45, 46. Katte gopuras.
47. Amavasya mantap.
48. Nandi—fourth one in the Mantap in front of the Dhwajastamba.
49. Platform around Mahamantap etc.
50. Karthekeya mantap.
51. Moola Mandiram—now occupied by Ishwara Swami. This was built by Krisna Deva Raya.
52. Pichai Ilayanar.

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